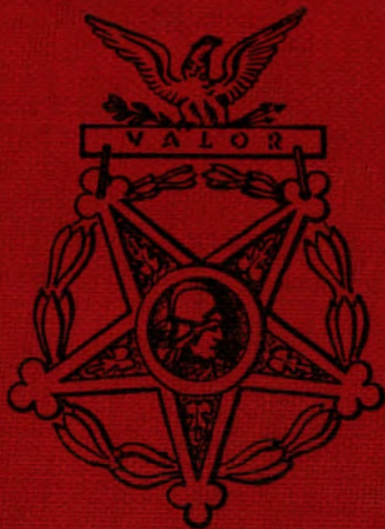
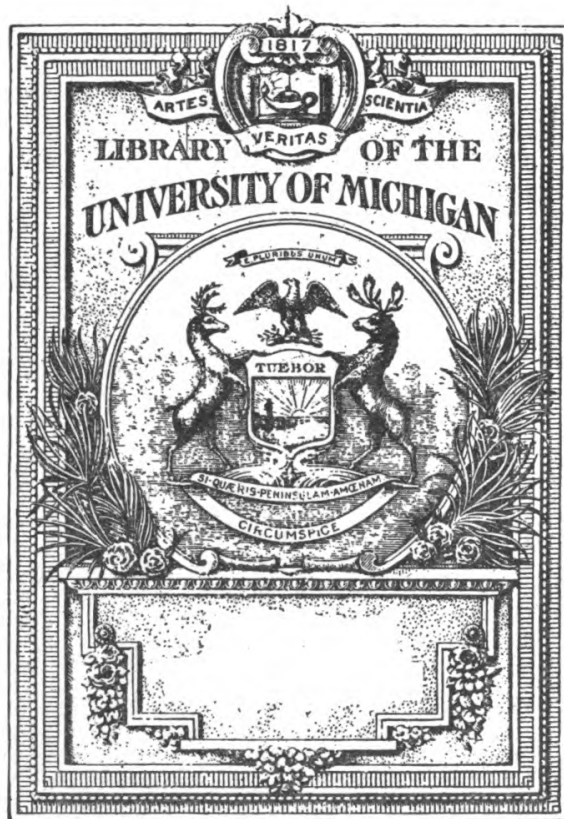


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THE GIFT OF
Mrs. Katherine Hawley

To Katharine Hawley
with a "K" and an "a"

Franklin M. Peck
October 14/44

Beyond the Call of Duty

BY THE AUTHOR

The Romance of American Transportation

Automobiles from Start to Finish

Varsity Letter

Radio from Start to Finish

Beyond the Call of Duty

Power from Start to Finish (*with* CLAIRE RECK)

One Man Against the North (*with* DAVID IRWIN)

Tomorrow We Fly (*with* WILLIAM B. STOUT)



BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

By

FRANKLIN M. ^{*Moving*} RECK
=

NEW YORK : 1944

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY



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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Black,
Lit
Sgt Mrs. Katherine Hawley
11-13-62

THIS book is dedicated to all the GI Joes who fight the war on the ground. The living Medal of Honor winners with whom the author talked all said: "Remember, there are a lot of men who deserved Medals but didn't get them. Please mention that fact in your book, will you?" The author herewith complies. This book is a tribute to all the unsung soldiers whose courage somehow went unnoticed.

THE author acknowledges the helpful cooperation of Major Frank Frazier and Lieutenant Eugene P. Healy of the War Department Bureau of Public Relations; Lieutenant Colonels William F. Nee and Benjamin C. Bowker at Army Service Forces headquarters; Lieutenant Joseph N. Casey at Walter Reed Hospital and all the soldiers at Walter Reed who helped the author get his facts straight; to wounded officers and returned veterans from all parts of the country who contributed background and detail; to parents and wives of Medal winners who contributed prewar background; and finally to Sergeant J. P. Morgan of the Second Platoon, M Company, Thirty-fifth Infantry, who took time out from fighting in the South Pacific, to write: "Here's what happened to Fournier and Hall on Guadalcanal . . ."

The map drawings are not intended as accurate scale and geographical guides. Detail has sometimes been altered so as to depict the complete action in which the Medal winners participated.

About the Medal and the Men

THE Medal of Honor is the highest decoration for bravery in battle awarded by the United States. It is frequently called the Congressional Medal of Honor, though the word "Congressional" doesn't properly belong in the title.

All citations for the Medal of Honor contain some variant of the following words:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity involving risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy."

There you have, in one sentence, all the qualifications of the award. The soldier must be in action with the enemy. There must be risk of life. He must do more than duty requires. He must show great gallantry and courage. On top of all this, his action must be of high inspiration to the rest of the command.

The Army has two other awards for heroism in action. They are the Distinguished Service Cross and the Silver Star. The qualifications for these two awards are much the same as those for the Medal of Honor, the difference between them merely being one of degree. The Medal of Honor ranks at the top. Fewer are given out. In the first twenty months of this war, only sixteen Medals of Honor were awarded to soldiers in the Army Ground Forces.

This book tells the stories of those first sixteen, plus two Army Air Force officers who won their decorations in a ground action during an infantry attack. Two of the winners in this book are Cavalry—jeep-mounted cavalry operating with the infantry during the Sicilian campaign.

All the others are Infantry. In this book there are no stories of aerial dogfights or bombing missions, no naval slugging matches in the South Seas. These are stories of men slogging through mud,

crawling toward pillboxes and artillery emplacements, charging up hills, sitting in watery foxholes, eating cold C rations, dusting sulfa powder on wounds, and dreaming of Paradise in terms of a hot bath and a cup of coffee. For the most part they are stories of gaunt, unshaven, fever-ridden young men just out of high school and college, who have proved themselves as tough and brave as any dictator-trained soldier in the world.

The book begins with Lieutenant Sandy Nininger, just a few months out of West Point, who won glory for himself in the first weeks on Bataan. It ends with Sergeant Gerry Kisters, who rode a bantam into the hearts of his fellow-soldiers near Gagliano, Sicily.

In between, you can follow in a series of individual exploits the whole pattern of the first twenty months of the war. Our immense seaborne invasion of Africa, in November, 1942. Our first offensives against the Japs at Guadalcanal and New Guinea, in December, 1942, and January, 1943. Our great Tunis campaign in April and May, 1943. Our recapture of Attu, in the far north, in May, 1943. And in July, 1943, our conquest of Sicily on one side of the world and our taking of New Georgia on the opposite side of the world. These winners are our pre-invasion heroes. They represent the men who turned the tide from defense to offense.

By what procedure is a man selected for the Medal of Honor? The answer is very simple.

These men received the Medal of Honor, first of all, because their most intimate comrades thought they deserved it. A recommendation for a Medal of Honor begins on the field of action, with fellow soldiers who saw or shared in the exploit.

Their enthusiasm conveys itself to the immediate commanding officer, who thereupon takes the testimony of privates, noncoms, lieutenants—anyone who saw the action—and writes up a recommendation. Recommendation and letters of testimony then go back through channels to regimental, divisional, and Army commands, until finally they arrive at the War Department in Washington where they are passed upon.

It isn't easy for a recommendation to survive the weighing and

sifting that occurs at each stage of its long journey. Only the most brave, selfless, inspirational deeds survive.

The severity of the conditions is indicated by what happened to the eighteen men in this book. Ten of them died in the action for which they received the Medal. Four more were wounded. Only four, by some miracle, came through unscratched.

The Medal of Honor dates from the Civil War. It was created first for the Navy on December 21, 1861, then for the Army on July 12, 1862. At first, the Army award was given only to enlisted men. By resolution of Congress it was "presented in the name of Congress to such noncommissioned officers and privates as shall most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities." Later in the Civil War the Medal was extended to commissioned officers. The winners in this book range from buck private to General MacArthur.

There are, to this day, separate Army and Navy Medals of Honor. Both are for heroism in action. Both rank above all other awards. The Medals are similar in appearance, but with minor differences in design.

The first Army Medal of Honor was designed by Anthony C. Paquet during the Civil War. It was a five-pointed bronze star containing in its center the figure of Minerva, representing the United States, repulsing Discord, represented by snakes.

The present Medal was designed by Major General George L. Gillespie in 1904. It is a five-pointed bronze star $1\frac{9}{16}$ inches in diameter bearing the head of Minerva and the words "United States of America." The star itself is surrounded by a green laurel wreath and hangs from a bronze bar bearing the single word, "Valor."

On the bar sits an eagle with outspread wings. In his beak he holds the clasp with which the Medal is suspended from its ribbon. All Medals of Honor, both Army and Navy, hang from a blue ribbon bearing small white stars. Service ribbons and rosettes, representing the Medal, are also blue with white stars. Whenever you see a small blue star-studded ribbon on a uniform, it means that the wearer has been awarded the Medal of Honor. When the winner dons a civilian suit, he wears the rosette.

Whenever possible, the Medal of Honor is presented by no one less than the President of the United States. One recipient in this book, General William Hale Wilbur, received his award from President Roosevelt on foreign soil—at Casablanca, French Morocco, during the President's January, 1943, conference with Churchill.

Other living recipients have received their Medals at the White House. Many have received the award in the theater of action, from the commanding general of the theater. Parents and wives of heroes who sacrificed their lives have been awarded the Medal at the White House, at Army camps, in public squares, and in the living rooms of their homes.

The few Medal winners with whom the author has talked do not like to be called "heroes." The word doesn't "go down" with them. Nor do such words as "glory" and "fame." Such history-book words, they feel, have little to do with the unpleasant business of marching and crawling and fighting. Words like "hero," "glory," and "fame" lend a pleasant air of romance to a business that is far from romantic.

Every living Medal winner is thankful to be alive. Every winner can instantly think of others who should have received the Medal but didn't. They think of fellow GI's who have gone on night attacks, with no one to witness their actions. They think of men who have shown day-in, day-out fortitude without ever having a chance to do something sensational enough to merit a Medal.

The winners don't want to be singled out. They want the public to know that the United States Army is full of Medal of Honor winners, whether formal awards have been made or not.

Medal of Honor Winners

Lieutenant Alexander R. Nininger, Jr.	I
Mess Sergeant José Calugas	II
Lieutenant Willibald C. Bianchi	19
General William H. Wilbur	27
Major Pierpont M. Hamilton and Colonel Demas T. Craw	44
Sergeant Kenneth E. Gruennert	60
Sergeant Elmer J. Burr	73
Sergeant William G. Fournier and Mess Orderly Lewis Hall	80
Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Davis	90
Sergeant William Lloyd Nelson	98
Private Joseph P. Martinez	107
Lieutenant David C. Waybur	119
Sergeant Rodger Wilton Young	132
Private Frank J. Petrarca	141
Lieutenant Gerry H. Kisters	148
General Douglas MacArthur	168

Beyond the Call of Duty

Sandy Nininger
| FIRST MEDAL WINNER |



Near Abucay, Bataan, January 12, 1942

ON the eastern shore of Bataan Peninsula, a long fish-pond dike wanders through a mangrove swamp to the edge of Manila Bay. The dike is about six feet high and three feet wide at the top, and looks like a Mississippi River levee.

In the early days of January, 1942, this dike was a scene of great activity. Stripped to shorts and shoes, hundreds of swarthy Filipinos were working waist deep in the swamp, cutting down mangrove trees with axe and saw, making clear lanes to the north and toward the sea, through which rifles and machine guns would have an unobstructed field of fire.

Other men were busy with spades and entrenching tools, digging foxholes on the narrow crest of the dike. One of the hardest workers was tall, wavy-haired Sandy Nininger, a twenty-three-year-old American officer only seven months out of West Point. The troops were members of A and B companies, First Battalion, Fifty-seventh Infantry, Philippine Scouts. Alexander R. Nininger, Jr., was one of their officers.

These men were working against time. Events in the past month had followed each other with shocking suddenness. First, the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Then the landing of Japanese troops at the Philippine ports of Vigan, Legaspi, Lamon Bay, and Lingayen. After that, the abandonment of Manila and the retreat of our troops into Bataan for a last-ditch fight against overwhelmingly superior forces. ? Not true

Bataan is about thirty miles long from north to south, and fifteen miles wide. Its outer coast, facing the China Sea, is rocky and heavily wooded, and its inner coast, bordering Manila Bay, is flatter. Down the center run high mountains.

This peninsula, known in peacetime for its coastal rice fields,

fishing villages, immense banyan and mangrove forests, and rugged mountain scenery, was to be America's first notable battlefield of World War II. With General MacArthur on Corregidor and General Jonathan Wainwright in the field, United States and Filipino soldiers, fighting side by side, were to hold the enemy at bay from January 1 to April 8, 1942.

In early January, our troops were busy "closing the gate" to the onrushing Japs. They were preparing a defense line across the top of the peninsula. Sandy Nininger and his men were at work on the right flank of the gate, making sure that no Japanese would slip around by sea and come in behind our lines.

They paid no attention to hours. They slapped at malarial mosquitoes and worked by night. They rubbed sweat from their eyes and worked by day. They took cat naps by their tools and got up to dig and saw and chop. They gulped down rations and hustled back to work. They had to be ready when the Japs came.

Sandy Nininger grinned and gave a hand and kept men going. Colonel George S. Clarke, commanding the Fifty-seventh, came around nightly to see how the work was going, and noted the inexhaustible vitality of the tall young officer.

Back at his command post, he turned to a staff officer. "It's worth a trip to the dike just to watch Nininger," he said. "He's *happy*. Actually happy. The more trouble he has with food and ammunition, the more pep he shows. It's contagious. You should see the way he has those men working!"

The colonel thought a moment, then added: "It's as though Sandy had trained all his life for this hour. As though the months and years of preparation had all been intended for this job." He shook his head in awe. "The less sleep he gets the more vitality he has!"

Anyone who had known Sandy all his life would hardly have been surprised at his spirited devotion to the job in hand. A high standard of conduct was an ingrained part of him.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, October 20, 1918, Sandy spent his school days in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. During his teens, he grew upward so fast that his weight couldn't keep pace with his height. When he appeared for football practice, the coach took one look at the bony, gangling boy and shook his head.

The youngster decided that the only way to convince the coach was to prove that he could do the two things most useful on a football team: tackle an opposing runner and get through the line with the ball. He acquired a pattern of large and colorful bruises proving his talents, but in the end it was impossible to keep him off the team.

After graduation from high school he had a chance to compete with others in an examination for entrance into West Point. In spite of the fact that most of the other candidates were college men, while he was only a high-school graduate, Sandy ranked second in the exams. When the first choice declined the opportunity, Sandy entered West Point as appointee of Congressman Mark Wilcox.

At the Academy, young Nininger demonstrated a capacity for organization and leadership that had already been well developed. He was wise and capable beyond his years. Back in Fort Lauderdale he had successfully organized the Dad's Club. Working with the Kiwanis Club, he had also formed a boys' organization known as the Key Club that still exists.

At West Point, as chairman of the lecture and entertainment committee, he did more than schedule a conventional series of talks and concerts; he originated the idea of having a Broadway show come to the Academy for a private performance. Under his persuasive power, the cast of "Arsenic and Old Lace," headed by Boris Karloff, agreed to perform at West Point, using on the stage furniture that had once been the property of General Custer. That Sandy's scholarship didn't suffer through his extra-curricular duties is proved by the fact that he graduated number 24 in a class of 426.

If this organizing ability gives the impression that Nininger was a hustling go-getter, the impression is wrong. Rather he was quiet and deeply sensitive in nature. He liked to have tea by the fireplace in the home of Colonel and Mrs. O. J. Gatchell, and listen to musical recordings. Much of his own spending money went into albums of classical music, and his favorite was Tschai-kovsky's Sixth Symphony. He liked to spend long hours with his fellow cadet, Elliott Cutler, debating everything from history and politics to the theory of relativity.

Older people liked to talk to him, and one of them said: "It was a privilege to talk to Sandy and get the 'feel' of him." Something in Sandy's spirit made an impression on older people. William Lyon Phelps, who met him at West Point, was to write: "I shall always feel his influence."

Sandy's ranking upon graduation from West Point entitled him to select his own branch of the service, and he unhesitatingly chose the infantry because, he confided in his friends, "I think I can be of most service there."

He left West Point in June, 1941, served a few short months at Fort Benning, Georgia, and left this country to join the Fifty-seventh Philippine Scouts. There was hardly time for him to become acquainted with his men when the Japanese struck and the Fifty-seventh retreated into Bataan. It was little wonder that this kind of officer should find a feeling of dedication and joy in the grim task of preparing a mangrove swamp for the coming of the Japanese.

When the attack came, however, it didn't come through Sandy's position in the mangrove swamp, nor did any Japanese try to slip around to seaward. Sandy's battalion was on the extreme right. Inland, to the left, was the Third Battalion of the Fifty-seventh. And to the left of them, where the land rose toward the mountains in the center of the peninsula, was another Filipino regiment, the Forty-first. When the attack came, it was accurately aimed at the point where the Forty-first Infantry and the Third Battalion joined.

The Japanese attacked by night, and continued the attacks night after night with reckless, suicidal courage. Their progress had been so swift up to this point that they fully expected to clean up Bataan in a few days.

On their very first night, they succeeded in breaking through between the Third Battalion and the Forty-first Infantry. Through the gap they poured a thousand snipers, who climbed into trees behind our main defense line and waited for the dawn.

The next morning ration and ammunition parties, making early morning trips to front-line positions, were fired upon. The panic and disorganization that resulted isn't hard to imagine. Unless the

snipers could be cleaned out the entire position was in great danger. One of the first officers to volunteer for the dangerous job of sniper-hunting was the man in command of the machine-gun company of the First Battalion—Captain Arthur W. Wermuth. Wermuth's achievements have become a part of the history of Americans in battle.

The result of Japanese infiltration was to turn the battle line into an arena of wild and unpredictable encounters. Instead of a clearly defined front line, with the enemy on one side and our troops on the other, the battlefield was an area more than a mile deep and several miles wide. In this forest there were Japs and Filipinos and Americans hopelessly mixed. No trail, no road was safe. Every tree and every turn of the road was a possible ambush. It was a kind of gigantic possum hunt, with the Japs playing possum and the Americans hunting them out.

On top of this, there were the unearthly tactics of the Japanese to test the souls of our troops, never before under fire. The Japs used firecrackers and drums to confuse us and try our nerves. Their snipers in trees cut loose with weird screams. Up on the front lines, whole companies of Japs would rise up in fields of cane, just to draw our fire and discover our gun positions. On one night, waves of enemy attacked the barbed wire of the Third Battalion, forming a bridge of dead Japanese over which succeeding waves came. Against this reckless, unorthodox attack were pitted green Filipino troops commanded by American officers.

With disaster constantly threatening the regiment, it was more than Sandy Nininger could tolerate, merely to stand in a foxhole on a dike and wait for orders. He asked his commanding officer for permission to go sniper hunting, and on January tenth and eleventh he crept through the woods, peering into the branches of trees, warily drawing upon himself telltale shots that would reveal a Jap position.

It wasn't easy. Sandy's commanding officer, Colonel Clarke, says: "I have walked up to the bole of a tree, looked up into the branches, and seen absolutely nothing. Yet, in that same tree, six Japs were later killed while I was still in the area."

One day, when Sandy was a boy in Fort Lauderdale, his father

shot a hawk not far from their home. The idea of killing a living thing shocked the boy. It seemed incredible that his own father could do this cruel thing.

"The hawk himself is a killer," the father explained. "He destroys birds—any bird smaller than he is. I didn't shoot him because I wanted to kill. I did it to protect other birds."

Sandy thought about the incident a great deal. Yet, even in West Point, he couldn't reconcile himself to the idea of killing. When he went into active service, he wrote to a friend that he had no feeling of hate, nor could he kill anyone out of hate. He could only shoot if he knew he was defending something greatly worth while. Now, on Bataan, Sandy looked into the trees for Japs and thought of the hawk his father had killed, long ago.

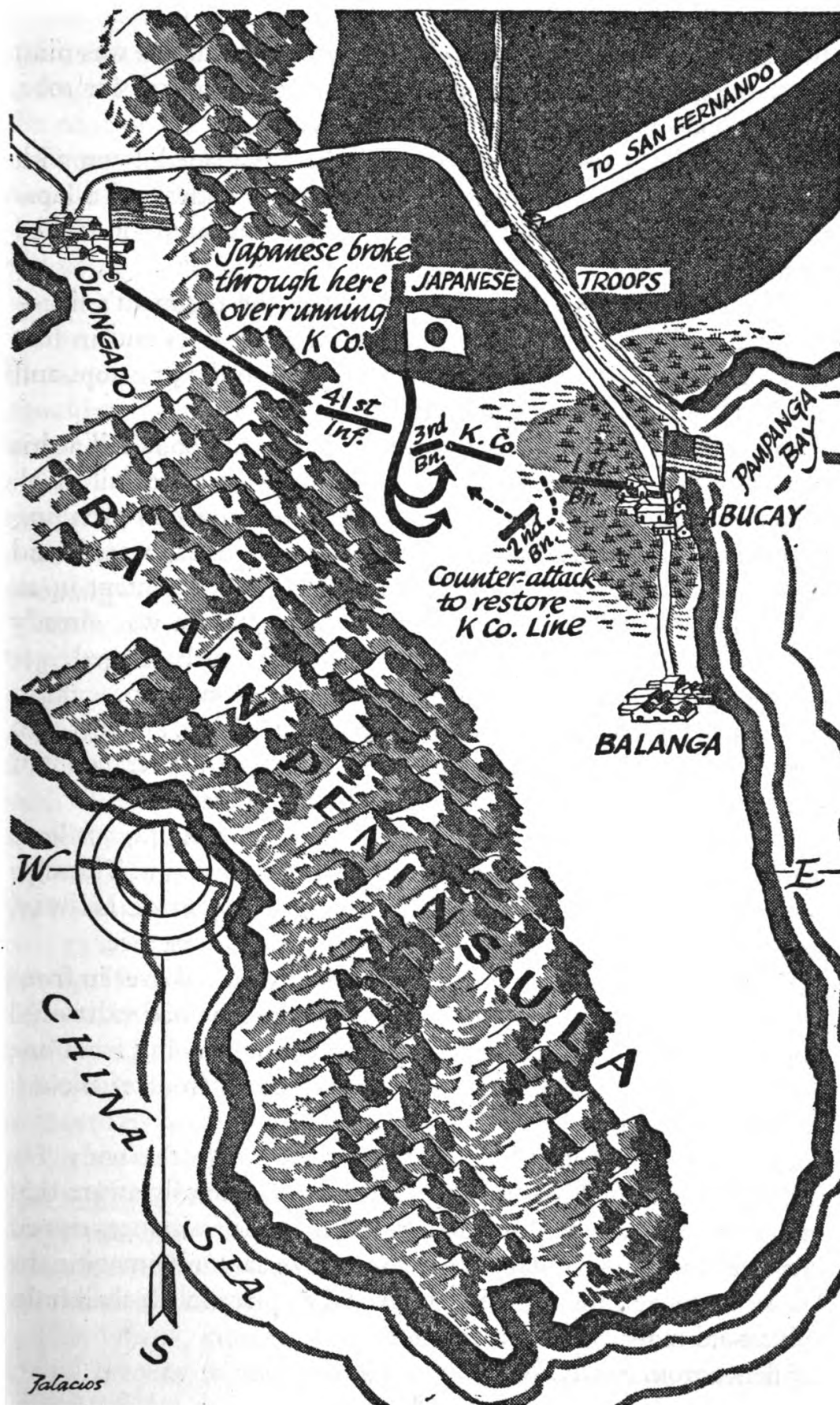
Going sniper hunting by day and guarding the dikes by night, Sandy had little time for sleep. He grew a little more gaunt, more hollow-eyed, more introspective as he pondered the problem of green troops against superior forces of battle-trained enemy. Then came the news, on the morning of January twelfth, that the Third Battalion was again in danger, that the Japanese had broken through and were in K Company's foxholes, and once again the regiment was about to be overrun.

The Second Battalion of the Fifty-seventh was in support and now it was time to throw them into battle to attempt to restore the position. While the counterattack was in process of formation, Nininger went to Colonel Clarke and asked for permission to go into the battle sector with two of his men.

By this time, Sandy must have overcome his last scruple against violence. He had seen his own comrades lying on the ground, victims of violence. Over his sensitive and friendly nature had grown a shell of resolve. "This time," he must have decided, "there will be no stopping. This time, we will take toll, and take toll, to the last shell."

An officer was later to say: "That he went into battle in the full knowledge of the probable outcome, there can be no doubt."

It is impossible to follow Sandy's exact steps on that fateful January twelfth. What is told here comes from the testimony of Colonel George S. Clarke, and the officers of companies K, L, and M, all of whom saw Sandy at some time on that day. It seems



that Sandy kept showing up all day, wherever the action was most grim, a little like a rescuing angel, with dirty olive drab for robe, and a blood-stained bayonet for shining sword.

When he left Colonel Clarke he was literally loaded down with grenades. A Garand rifle was slung over his shoulder and a Japanese "tommy gun" was in his hand. Belts of ammunition circled his waist.

He walked directly to the hottest spot in the regiment's line—the area of K Company. Here the Japs were in trees and in foxholes, putting down a fire that snapped through the grasstops and effectively stopped our counterattack.

Sandy shot his first Jap out of a tree. When the body fell at his feet, something seemed to come over Sandy—a strange, wild feeling of exaltation, as if some divine power had given an avenging sword into his hands. The sensitive music lover disappeared, and in his place there was a dirt-grimed ruthless fighter, intent upon destroying every Jap within reach. At this time, he was already wounded, since an officer reported that his leg was bandaged.

Through the area of K Company he crawled and ran, seeking out enemy foxholes. Supremely contemptuous of fire, he crept into range and tossed grenades. Men of K Company later counted some twenty Japs killed in their area by his grenades.

Now our counterattack was moving ahead and the Jap artillery was laying down a heavy barrage into the area to stop it. Through the explosions and the flying dirt, Sandy swiftly made his way, drawn as if by magnet toward enemy points of resistance.

With K Company now going ahead, Sandy moved over in front of the attacking Second Battalion. By this time, he had exhausted his rifle ammunition and was using his bayonet, leaping from one shell hole to another, clearing out opposition in front of the advancing battalion.

Here he was wounded again, this time through the body. He tumbled into a shell hole and lay there panting, hardly aware that he had been hit. A first-aid man crawled to his assistance, ripped open his shirt, and bandaged the wound. We can only imagine the one-sided conversation that must have taken place in the shell hole.

First-aid man: "This is a bad one."

Silence from Sandy.

First-aid man: "Don't worry. We'll get you back in a jiffy."

Impatient silence from Sandy as he twists and pulls himself to the edge of the shell hole.

First-aid man: "Hey, where do you think you're going? Come back here! Hey!"

In the words of Colonel Clarke: "Sandy must have had a premonition that he was going to die, because the first-aid man couldn't hold him in that shell hole."

The Second Battalion saw Sandy's final action. As the lanky blond officer leaped out of the shell hole, a bullet slammed into his shoulder, turning him half around. Staggering from loss of blood he made directly for the Japanese positions. A Jap officer and two enlisted men, desperate at the sight of this soldier, who materialized first in one place, then another, dealing out destruction with grenades, tommy gun, and bayonet, charged toward him with their own bayonets leveled.

Sandy closed with them. He knocked aside the first soldier's bayonet and thrust twice with his own. As the man fell, he leaped at the second Jap and clubbed him to earth. Turning quickly, he ran the officer through. Then, while the officer was weaving and holding his hand to his side, Sandy went to his knees. Presently, with a little sigh, he collapsed forward on his face, arms outstretched.

Later, when first-aid men were able to crawl to where Sandy lay, they found the dead Japanese officer lying across his legs and the two enlisted men sprawled near by. None of them had wounded Sandy. He had fallen from exhaustion. Too little life blood was left in him to sustain him any longer. As he lay there, surrounded by enemy dead, his valiant heart slowed down and stopped.

Nobody knows how many of the enemy Nininger accounted for, in those few hours of action. More important than any actual count is the supreme fact that Sandy appeared wherever the fighting was rugged, inspiring green troops with an example of courage, demonstrating that the enemy could be put down, and the Fifty-seventh could advance. Sandy was the spark plug. He was the one who showed these men what they could do.

The official citation says: "Lieutenant Nininger repeatedly forced his way to and into hostile position." (Yes, in front of K,

L, M and the counterattacking Second Battalion.) "He succeeded in destroying several enemy groups in foxholes, and enemy snipers. Although wounded three times, he continued his attacks until he was killed after pushing alone far within the enemy positions." (So far, that finally three Japanese rose from the ground to eliminate him with cold steel, and were themselves eliminated by Sandy's keener steel.)

When Sandy was a small boy, his mother discovered him in the garden, entirely devoid of clothes, standing on a stone post with his right arm held high. When she asked him what he was doing, he told her: "I am the Statue of Liberty." His parents had shown him the statue on a trip to New York, and he had been impressed with the great figure of Liberty holding aloft the torch of Freedom. On January 12, 1942, Sandy was once more the boy in the garden, holding aloft a bright flame for his regiment to see.

Lieutenant Alexander R. Nininger, Jr. was reverently buried in grave No. 9 behind the south wall of the Abucay Church, near the shore of Manila Bay in the peninsula of Bataan. Late in January his father, theater manager at Lake Worth, Florida, was notified that his son had been awarded the Medal of Honor, the first such award to a soldier in World War II. On February tenth, Alexander R. Nininger, Sr., received the Medal from Major General Walter H. Frank, in a simple ceremony in the office of the Third Air Force headquarters at Tampa.

Later, a park at Fort Knox was named Nininger Park, in honor of Sandy. During the dedication, Colonel Freeman W. Bowley, representing the superintendent of West Point, presented a framed photograph of Lieutenant Nininger to the Fort Knox commandant with these words:

"I have here a photograph of Alexander Nininger. The eyes are clear and alert. The mouth is sensitive. The face as a whole is that of an artist or a musician.

"It is requested that the photograph be hung near this grove. We ask that you hang beneath it these words of Phillips Brooks:

"There is a limit to what a man may accomplish: there is no limit to what he may attempt."

José Calugas

FILIPINO ARTILLERYMAN



Near Culis, Bataan, January 16, 1942

IN a little thicket of trees above the settlement of Culis, Mess Sergeant José Calugas was busy preparing food for the members of Battery B.

At the moment, his battery wasn't in action. Other batteries of the Eighty-eighth Field Artillery were. They were emplaced in the hills and woods about a thousand yards north of Joe's field kitchen, loading shells into the breech, yanking lanyards, working the guns until the barrels were too hot to touch, pouring high explosive at the onrushing Japs on the Pampanga-Olongapo road.

Battery B was resting. Some of the men were stretched out under the trees, dozing. Some were squatting in the shade, mending socks, and cleaning pistols and rifles. Except for Joe and his mess detail, Battery B was relaxed as only soldiers can relax who know that hours of rest are precious and will soon end.

Nobody knew on January 16, 1942, how bitterly the battle of Bataan would end. Battery B was high spirited. What if they had been forced to retreat into Bataan? Far over the seas, in America, reinforcements were surely on the way. Soon they would come—shiploads of men and guns and trucks and tanks and fighter planes. Meanwhile, here in these hills, Filipinos and Americans, fighting side by side, would hold the fort until help arrived.

As Joe stood over the field kitchen, he had time to think a little. He wondered how his wife and little boy were getting along without him, in the far-off district of Iloilo. He hoped they were well out of the war, and that no Japs would go through the village.

Joe wasn't a big man. He measured five feet four inches and weighed 116 pounds. That is, he had weighed 116 pounds before the sleepless, hurried flight into Bataan peninsula. Now he prob-

ably weighed no more than 105. Yet his years on a farm had given him a wiry frame and plenty of endurance. He was proud that in spite of his thirty-four years he was able to march and fight and keep up with the twenty-year-olds around him. For Joe was a veteran. He had served in the Philippine Scouts since 1930. The rest of the battery looked up to him as an old-timer.

Being an old-timer was a responsibility. These youngsters had a way of looking to Joe for reassurance. They knew that something was in the wind. Something that made the officers frown and squint their eyes as they gazed at the ridges to the north. So, when these boys around Joe asked him, half-joking: "What d'you think, Joe? Can we hold 'em?" it was up to Joe to give them confidence.

"Sure, we'll hold 'em," Joe replied.

But down in his heart, he knew it wasn't as simple as that. The Japs had come along too fast. Rolling on the heels of the Filipinos with their tanks, mobile artillery, and trucks full of soldiers, they had captured the all-important Pampanga-Olongapo road. This road stretched across the top of the peninsula. With the smooth highway in their possession, the Japs could quickly move east or west and launch an attack anywhere they wished.

A nice lateral road was a swell thing for an army to have. The Japs had it, and the Filipinos didn't. Therefore it was up to our side to build their defenses and build them fast.

One scant mile back of Joe's kitchen, Filipinos and Americans were working feverishly, digging trenches, setting up machine guns and pillboxes, placing observation posts on the hilltops. They needed three or four precious days to get ready, and it was the job of a few rearguard infantrymen and Joe's Eighty-eighth Field Artillery to give them those days. In other words, the Eighty-eighth had its work cut out for it. Every gun had to stay in action. Every shot had to count.

All this Joe knew, better than the youngsters of Battery B. But it wouldn't do to tell them how ticklish the situation was. It was better to say, with a show of confidence:

"Sure, we'll hold 'em."

"What about chow, Sarge?" a soldier asked.

"Pretty soon," Joe replied.

An American officer came up and spoke briefly to Joe, telling him that a food dump had been established back in the woods, near the Culis trail. Joe replied that he knew where it was and would soon send back a detail for rations.

Joe didn't think there was anything surprising about an American and a Filipino fighting side by side against a common enemy. To Joe, American-Filipino friendship was as old as life. Yet there was a time when it wasn't so.

As a boy, Joe had often heard his father talk about the early days, when Admiral Dewey had come to Manila and chased out the Spaniards. When Dewey's ships rode into Manila Bay, the senior Calugas and thousands of other Filipinos had thought, joyously:

"Now we're free. America has liberated us. She will give us independence."

But America refused to grant independence immediately. Bitterly disappointed, the Filipinos decided: "We have traded one tyrant for another. America will never free us. She's as bad as Spain. All white men look upon brown men as slaves."

Four years of fighting followed, until the outnumbered Islanders had finally given up the struggle. But even before the bitter insurrection ended, the Filipinos began to realize that America wasn't Spain. America was different.

One of the first things America did was to send over a boatload of teachers. It was a wonderful thing, sending over teachers and schoolbooks and setting up grade and high schools in the towns and villages. Spain had never done that, because it suited Spain to keep the people in ignorance.

One of those first American teachers, Luther Parker, went into a small village in Luzon, and when the children crowded around him, crying:

"Teach us English! Teach us English!" this man took a boy on his knee and taught him these words:

"I am a Filipino."

Luther Parker didn't teach the child to say: "I am an American subject." He made the boy proud of the fact that he was a Filipino.

Joe Calugas had often heard this story told in high school, in Iloilo. He had heard how the Americans had sent over doctors

and engineers, how illiteracy had decreased and newspapers and radio stations had sprung up. He knew the story of how the Americans had promised the Filipinos independence, and how Congress had kept the faith by setting 1946 as the year when complete freedom would be established.

Americans didn't set themselves up as a superior race. In Manila, Islanders and Americans went to parties and the theater together. If an American broke the law of the Philippines, he was tried in a Philippine court by a Filipino judge. That was equality. That was what was meant by democracy.

No wonder, then, that Joe and an American officer were fighting side by side. No wonder that Filipinos looked with pride and affection at the American flag that flew beside the flag of the Philippines over the schoolhouses of Luzon. The American flag meant freedom, and freedom was a precious thing to men who had fought three hundred years for the right to rule themselves.

More than forty years before, President McKinley had said something that every Filipino knew by heart:

"The Philippines are ours, not to exploit but to develop, to civilize, to educate, *to train in the science of self-government*. This is the path of duty which we must follow or be recreant to the mighty trust committed to us."

America had kept the faith.

And so, when Japan invaded the Philippines expecting to get help from Filipinos in throwing out the white man, she found herself facing not only a paltry 14,000 American troops, but 96,000 armed and determined Filipinos as well.

Joe's spine tingled to the stories of heroism that had already come out of this campaign. Joe and his fellow soldiers spoke in hushed, proud tones of Buenaventura J. Bello, the little schoolteacher of Vigan.

When the Jap column rumbled past the small schoolhouse of Vigan, they found the Stars and Stripes flying alongside the Filipino flag above the schoolhouse roof. Bello himself stood at the base of the flagpoles.

A Jap officer stopped and ordered the schoolteacher to take down the American flag. Bello refused.

"We have no quarrel with you," the Jap said. "All I ask is that

you pull down the American flag and you can keep your own still flying. I will give you two minutes to make up your mind. If you still refuse, my soldiers will shoot."

Bello calmly watched the Jap soldiers load and take aim. He knew that it would be a simple matter to untie a knot and let the flag slide to earth. But for many years he had told his students that the Stars and Stripes meant freedom. To take it down now would be like betraying his own deepest and finest beliefs. Even though he had a wife and six children anxiously waiting for him at home, he couldn't betray himself and all he had taught. So he said:

"I don't need two minutes. Tell your men to shoot now, because I shall never take down either flag."

The Jap officer swore angrily, then barked a command. Across the little schoolyard the shots echoed and the forty-two-year-old teacher fell to the ground.

Bello was already a national hero. And so was Nicomedes Suller, mayor of San Manuel.

When Jap tanks rolled into San Manuel, Suller took a simple, literal view of his sworn duty to protect the town. If you didn't want invaders going through your town, you told them to get out. So Suller stood in the middle of the road, a pistol in his hand, and told the Japs they weren't wanted.

They ignored him. The tanks rolled implacably on, toward the mayor of the town.

There was little that one man with a pistol could do against tanks, but Suller did what he could. He ran to the nearest tank and emptied his gun through the porthole. From another tank a fusillade of shots rang out and the mayor dropped into the dust of the road, lifeless.

Even though the invasion was only a few weeks old, the Honor Roll of Philippine heroes was growing. Bello. Suller. And Jesus A. Villamor, pursuit pilot, who took off in an obsolete airplane and recklessly flung his frail ship into squadron after squadron of Jap bombers, scattering them and spoiling their aim.

Joe Calugas hovered over the field kitchen, thinking of his wife and boy and of the heroism of his countrymen. Even while he was working and thinking of these things, the enemy, less

than two miles away, were planning the destruction of the Eighty-eighth Field Artillery.

It was to be a calculating and complete destruction, typical of an enemy who knew his superiority.

The Japs were well aware that only a few artillery pieces and a scattering of infantrymen stood between them and the half-prepared Culis line. If they could break through now, they would disorganize our forces and force us to retire deeper into the peninsula. So, methodically, they planned to destroy every artillery piece between them and Culis. With low-flying planes they would bomb every gun position. Meanwhile their own field guns would pour a concentrated barrage on each observed and located gun.

The rain of death began while Joe was busy at the kitchen. On all the positions of the Eighty-eighth Field Artillery, the bombs sped earthward and the shells arched down, throwing up geysers of dirt and leaving gaping holes in the earth. The air rustled with the roaring of shells. As it began, the men of Battery B leaped to their feet, their eyes straining northward past the wooded ravines, searching out the forward gun positions a scant thousand yards ahead.

Up there, the landscape was leaping skyward in smoke. All the land between was bursting into flame. Overhead, whining craft with the emblem of the Rising Sun were diving, releasing little black objects that slanted down and puffed out in billows of smoke.

Some of the planes came over Joe's area. His battery mates kneeled on the ground and fired futile rifle shots at the diving, banking ships.

Joe walked to a clearing and looked up into the sky. His eyes swung northward to the expanse of boiling earth. They focused on the low hill ahead, where a battery of two field pieces was bravely answering the combined barrage and bombing. Around his head echoed shouts of casualties and disaster. Then came the words:

"One of the batteries up there has been knocked out! All the crew has been killed!"

Between Joe and the knocked-out battery lay one thousand yards of rolling ground, heaving and tossing under the most concentrated barrage yet loosed upon any part of the Bataan line. The

farther north Joe's eyes went, the worse was the barrage. On that ridge, a thousand yards away, the inferno of smoke and noise was worst of all.

Joe was thinking: "That gun is needed. There must be something I can do."

He ignored the barrage. He ignored the fact that the battery up ahead wasn't his own. He started running. Men yelled at him to stop. They told him he was crazy. Then, as his slight form became smaller against the smoking landscape, they stood still and prayed, until his body disappeared into the smoke of the forward ridge.

At the gun emplacement, Joe found the field piece leaning crazily into a bomb crater. Limp forms lay near by, just as they had been flung by the explosion. Most of the forms were silent. One or two were rolling on the ground, and groaning.

One man, slightly wounded, was able to help. Joe yelled to the other battery, not far away, for any men who could be spared. He impressed ammunition carriers into service, and presently an improvised crew, under Joe's leadership, was tugging at the gun, pulling it into position.

Overhead, Jap planes were still wheeling and diving on the position. When the slanting bombs came too close, Joe and his crew dropped to the ground. In between explosions, they repaired the gun, stacked ammunition, found the target and range, and began firing.

Less than a mile ahead was the Jap-held military road. On it, a Jap attack was forming. Observers for the battery could plainly see the concentration of troops and vehicles. They could see Jap mortar emplacements and mobile guns.

A grim duel began. On one side, Jap bombers and artillery were desperately trying to knock out the guns of the Eighty-eighth. On the other side, the Eighty-eighth was trying at close range to break up the concentration of trucks, guns, and troops.

Ammunition trains came up to Joe's gun, stacking shells close by. Joe's crew fired until night came, then stood sleepless watch against infiltrating Japs, and at dawn began firing once more.

For three vital days, Joe Calugas, mess sergeant, commanded the gun he had put back in commission. For three days the Japs

tried to silence the accurate devastating fire of the Eighty-eighth. For three days, the Eighty-eighth kept the Jap attack off balance. When it came time for the Eighty-eighth to pull back, the Culis line was as ready as it could be for the next onslaught of the enemy.

Joe returned to his duties as mess sergeant of Battery B unaware that he had done anything exceptional. It was a surprise to him when word came in February that America's highest award for heroism, the Medal of Honor, would be presented to him by General MacArthur in the name of the President of the United States.

It never occurred to Joe that he was now ranked alongside Bello, Suller, and Villamor on the roll of Filipino heroes, or that his self-sacrificing devotion to duty had cemented more firmly the bond of friendship between Filipino and American.

In time Bataan fell, and José Calugas trudged the pain-ridden highway to some Jap prison stockade, there to wait the long, weary months until he could rejoin his wife and boy in Iloilo and resume his life as a free man under the flag of the independent, democratic Philippine Republic.

Bill Bianchi

BATAAN FIGHTER



In the Tuol River Pocket, Bataan, February 3, 1942

LIEUTENANT WILLIBALD C. BIANCHI lay in the Bataan jungle, three times wounded and in mortal danger from Japanese machine-gun fire.

Shocked into unconsciousness by a mortar explosion that peppered his body with metal fragments, Bill's mind was set free to roam to pleasanter places than a dusty, malarial jungle. To his mother's bakery in New Ulm, Minnesota, fragrant with the odor of fresh-baked bread. To the farm outside New Ulm where he had learned to milk cows, feed thousands of White Leghorn chicks, and hunt rabbits with a .22. To his crowded, happy days at South Dakota State College, where he swept out classrooms and tended furnace to earn his way through school.

Bill's conduct, up to the moment of the mortar explosion, was helping to win a battle. Because of what he had done, troops were now advancing past him. Later, he would receive a citation from the President of the United States, containing the unforgettable words: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action, above and beyond the call of duty."

Yet his actions on this day were not the inspiration of the moment. His courage, his leadership, and his indifference to wounds were no sudden creation. They were built into him, fiber by fiber, through the years of his life. Bill's past was with him on February 3, 1942, in Bataan.

Born March 12, 1915, in New Ulm, Bill Bianchi moved to a 73-acre poultry and dairy farm when he was five years old. Here, on the bluffs overlooking the junction of the Minnesota and Cottonwood rivers, Bill spent the first twenty-one years of his life.

After school and in the summers, the growing youngster had few idle moments. On the Bianchi farm there were at times thirty cows that needed daily milking. In the chicken house there was an incubator with a capacity of twenty thousand eggs. In addition to maintaining large flocks of Leghorns, the family raised more than a thousand turkeys each year. There were five children in the family, four girls and Bill, and Bill was the second oldest. With his Dad, he shared the heavy work on the farm.

"Bill really loved his work," his mother, Carrie Bianchi, writes. "When he could go into the woods to pick flowers and mushrooms, and dig out young trees and transplant them on the home grounds, he was really happy. He raised Chinchilla rabbits for pets. Bill was blessed with good health."

New Ulm is a German settlement. Its early settlers migrated to this country seeking freedom and opportunity, and with them they brought a sense of thrift and a willingness to work hard. Bill's grandparents were both born in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, though they were of Italian descent. Like many Italians, they had a natural love of the land and a talent for growing things and beautifying their homes. In this atmosphere of thrift, appreciation of nature, and hard outdoor work, Bill grew to strong manhood. All this was with him, helping him on Bataan.

There was a streak of combativeness in Bill, too, that stood him in good stead as a soldier. His friends recall the time when a gang of fellows raided the Bianchi melon patch down near the Cottonwood River. With their stolen watermelons they were just getting into their car when young Bill came down the road in the darkness to see what was going on.

One boy had failed to get into the car, and without hesitation Bill closed in on him. They wrestled, and in the scuffle the other boy pulled away and swung a blow that landed on Bill's nose.

This organ, unfortunately, had undergone a recent operation, and as Bill backed away in pain, the other fellow leaped into the car and escaped. The incident was a lesson to Bill. Later, at the University Farm School in St. Paul, he was to become the school's heavyweight boxing champion. The growing Bianchi wasn't one to shrink from combat, or stop to count the numbers arrayed against him.

Responsibility was shoved onto Bill's broad shoulders early in life. When he was a sophomore at New Ulm High, his father died and Bill had to take over the burden of farm work. After completing his high school education at the University Farm School, he devoted full time to the farm.

In 1936, when he was twenty-one, Bill Bianchi decided that he must have a college education. With his mother's consent he entered the agriculture department of South Dakota State College, majoring in poultry. College was hardly a bed of roses for him. To earn money for tuition, books, and meals, he took a job with the school maintenance department. Every morning at 4:30 he got up to sweep out the college print shop and various classrooms, working fast to finish up in time to eat breakfast and get to eight o'clock class. He paid for his room at the Larry Olson home by taking care of the furnace and watching the Olson youngsters when the parents went out.

Probably, when he entered South Dakota State, Bill intended to follow a career of large-scale poultry raising. It was the life he knew best. He made the college poultry judging team and one year accompanied it to the national competition at the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago.

But now, against this natural talent for farming, the urge for a military career began to assert itself. Like many other students in the late 1930's, Bill sensed that the world was about to explode. He had already served in the National Guard unit at New Ulm, and now he joined the R.O.T.C. at college. Except for his first quarter, he was a straight *A* student in military, and soon began to be known by fellow students as "Medals."

When he was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation in 1940, he requested foreign service in order to see action at the earliest possible date.

Bill's request was soon granted. In April, 1941, he left this country for the Philippines, to take on the task of converting Filipino natives into trained soldiers. This was seven months before Pearl Harbor, but Second Lieutenant Bianchi knew that trouble lay ahead. From Hawaii, he had written to his mother:

"I guess Uncle Sam is giving us a farewell party. The good old soul. We are going to the Philippines, one of our farthest posses-

sions, and we intend to keep it so. It is up to us and we are going to do our utmost."

It was a declaration of a soldier's creed, the statement of a man who knew that time was running out and there was much to be done.

In the Philippines, Bill was assigned to the Forty-fifth Infantry, Philippine Scouts, native troops, American-officered. The men with whom twenty-six-year-old Bianchi worked were tribesmen of Luzon and Mindanao, experts with knife and bolo. They were the Tagalogs, Moros, and Igorots of the islands, most of them stubby and broad-shouldered, and of swarthy complexion.

Bill distinguished himself, training these men. An American correspondent wrote back:

"These natives have been transformed into fearless fighters through the untiring efforts of American officers. Chiefly efficient were Second Lieutenant Willibald C. Bianchi and First Lieutenant Arthur W. Wermuth."

The correspondent's estimate was a prophecy of greater deeds to come. Of the two men, Wermuth was to become known as a One-Man Army. The other was to win the country's highest award for bravery in action, the Medal of Honor.

Thus Bianchi, Wermuth, Nininger, and those other men and officers who made up our first expeditionary force of World War II, worked against time to create an army to withstand Japanese aggression.

In the end, there wasn't enough time. When Pearl Harbor came and the southward-swarming Japanese landed in Luzon, we had for the Bataan defense no more than thirty thousand Filipino troops, only half of them trained. On Bataan we had one regiment of Regular Army, the Thirty-first Infantry, plus auxiliary forces such as Signal Corps, Air Forces, engineers, and tankmen, approximately five thousand in all. We had another seven thousand Americans on the rock of Corregidor in Manila Bay. We had about thirty tanks. We had perhaps ten airplanes.

We didn't have enough troops to oppose Japanese landings. Nor did we have enough men to do more than delay the enemy as their armies converged on Manila. There was nothing to do, in that bitter Christmas season of 1941, but to retreat into the peninsula of

Bataan and there keep a foothold in the Philippines until reinforcements came.

Our men on Bataan didn't look quite like the customary picture of a World War II soldier. They had the shallow helmets of World War I. They lacked the refinements of ordnance and equipment that were to come later. The men on Bataan were the pioneers. They were the men who held the line while the country was getting ready.

Sandy Nininger's regiment had shown, early in January, what our forces might have done if supplies and reinforcements could have reached Bataan. But after our successful counterattack of early January, the Japs began filtering through the woods on the slopes of the undefended mountains in the center of the peninsula.

Here Bill Bianchi's Forty-fifth Infantry saw heavy service, plugging the gap in the defense line, hunting out Jap snipers and strong points and eliminating them. But the infiltration couldn't be stopped. Our trucks, moving to the front, found themselves fired upon. Detachments several miles behind the front ran into ambushes. There was nothing to do but retreat to a line halfway down the peninsula. This line, running from Bagac, a small coastal village on the west, to Pilar on the east, was shorter and more defensible.

But this line was hardly established when the Japanese under General Homma tried new tactics to bring the Philippine campaign to a quick conclusion. They began sending parties around by water and landing them on the coast, behind our lines.

It was into this desperate crisis that Bill Bianchi's Forty-fifth was rushed by red open-sided trucks from the Manila Bay side, around the coastal road, to the China Sea side.

One of the Japanese threats was at the Tuol River, not far from Bagac. Here they had made a dangerous salient in our lines, and when February third dawned they were still there. Unless they were cleaned out, our whole defense position was in danger.

The company commanded by Lieutenant R. K. Roberts was ordered to advance. Bill's company was in reserve at the time, but officers were none too plentiful. On his own initiative, Bill Bianchi joined Roberts' company.

They had to crawl. Fire from hidden machine guns was so in-

tense that rising to a crouch was risking one's life. Ahead of him, Bill could glimpse an abandoned American tank, rendered useless when the Japs had taken the position.

Then, inching forward near Roberts, Bill suddenly felt a sharp blow and a sudden numbness in his left hand. He looked sideways at it, to find it bloody with two bullet wounds.

Bill lay there, his eyes searching the woods to see where the fire had come from.

"Better crawl back and get that fixed," he was advised.

Bill shook his head. Up ahead he thought he could see the Jap machine gun that had fired at him. It was poked out from behind a large tree, well hidden by immense roots.

With only one hand, he could hardly use his rifle. Letting it lie there, he loosened his pistol in its holster, then pulled out a grenade. A little more squirming and he was within throwing distance. Presently there was an explosion, just back of the tree. A second grenade followed, and now there was no more fire from that quarter. In the words of the citation:

"He located a machine-gun nest and personally silenced it with grenades."

The Japanese knew how to set up positions. One machine-gun nest was invariably protected by the cross fire of another. Moving forward, Bill felt the shock of two more bullets ripping through his chest muscles.

The American tank was near by. Ignoring his many wounds, Bill dashed for it, and lay behind it for a moment, panting to get his breath. Somehow he climbed to the top and lay on the hot metal, fumbling with his good hand at the anti-aircraft machine gun mounted there.

Very soon he had it firing. From here he could see other nests. Enemy bullets ricocheted off the sides of the tank. Bill swung the machine gun around. There were targets, plenty of them. He had the satisfaction of seeing men fall, while others ducked for cover, to get away from Bill's relentless gun. Under his covering fire, Japanese fire fell off, and Roberts' company closed in to deal with the enemy.

They were well on their way to cleaning up the Tuol River



Palacios

pocket when a sharp explosion lifted Bill's body from the tank and dropped him to the ground.

It may have been a mortar. It may have been a grenade. Whatever it was, Bill Bianchi, wounded a third time and unconscious from the blast, had finished his work.

It was some time later that Bill's mother, Carrie Bianchi, received a telegram from the Adjutant General of the United States Army. It read:

"Deeply regret to inform you that your son, 1st Lt. Willibald Charles Bianchi, was seriously wounded in action in the Philippines on February 3. Progress reports will be forwarded as received."

There followed anxious days for the family. Silent, worried days for his mother, Mrs. Carrie Bianchi, as she carried on at the bakery in New Ulm. Tense days for the grandmother, Mrs. Willibald Eibner. And for the lieutenant's four sisters, one of whom Bill had helped through nurses' training at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, with a monthly check out of his officer's pay. This sister later was to go overseas as an Army nurse.

Better news followed. First, the information that he had passed the crisis and would recover. Then, the stunning announcement that upon recommendation of General MacArthur, Lieutenant Bianchi would be awarded the Medal of Honor. On top of this in quick succession came interviews by reporters, stories and pictures in the newspapers and national magazines, radio publicity, and similar fanfare that left Mrs. Bianchi unmoved.

Bill himself was unaware of the publicity. Returned to duty, he served out the final weeks on Bataan, until our soldiers, weakened by illness and gaunt from hunger, finally surrendered to overwhelming Japanese forces. With the other survivors he went to Prison Camp No. 1 in the Philippines, there to wait for the day of deliverance.

Mrs. Bianchi is waiting too. "If my son and daughter can play a small part in creating a lasting peace, then they have not suffered and sacrificed in vain," she writes with calm philosophy. And later: "I guess Bill never realized that his work was spread all over the United States. He will be surprised when he comes home.

"Won't those be happy days?"

Colonel Wilbur

ASSAULT LEADER



At Fedala, French Morocco, November 8, 1942

COLONEL WILLIAM HALE WILBUR stood in the bow of the landing craft, trying to pierce the wall of darkness ahead of him. The muffled throb of the engine, the swish of water past the flat steel sides, and the murmured commands of the coxswain were the only sounds to be heard in the craft.

The small deck space was crowded. Besides the coxswain and his crew, there were eight Commandos, six engineers, an officer, and a jeep with its driver, Corporal Sanford M. Forbes of Milwaukee.

Commandos and engineers were dressed in the anonymous denim of combat, with all insignia of rank removed. They were armed for battle. They knew they might have to start fighting the moment the blunt nose of the craft scraped sand.

Against this businesslike garb, Colonel Wilbur felt self-conscious in his spick and span O.D. uniform with the silver eagles of his rank shining on his shoulders and the service ribbons on his tunic. Wilbur was dressed differently because his mission was different.

The job of the others was to secure a beachhead. Wilbur's task was to penetrate the enemy lines, find the commanding officer, and ask for an armistice to prevent bloodshed between Frenchmen and Americans. Therefore he had to be dressed like an emissary, not a fighter. If his uniform and insignia made him a more desirable target for enemy riflemen, then that was a chance he had to take.

Approaching a hostile shore, Wilbur reflected, was a little like sitting on the edge of a live volcano. You never knew at what exact moment the night would erupt in flame.

Somewhere ahead of them was the curving white beach above the Moroccan port of Fedala, about twenty miles north of the

French headquarters city of Casablanca. On the battle maps Wilbur had studied aboard ship, this beach was divided into segments designated: "Red Beach 1, Red Beach 2, Blue Beach 1, Blue Beach 2." These were objectives for the assault waves that were now moving silently toward the African shore, in the predawn blackness of Sunday, November 8, 1942.

Wilbur wondered how well defended the beaches would be. Certainly there were machine guns and coastal artillery batteries on the jut of land that formed the harbor of Fedala. There were searchlights, too, that could pick out a landing craft in a merciless spotlight for the benefit of itching gunners.

It would be an interesting job, Wilbur thought, getting past the French defenses with a jeep. And after he was past the front-line defenses, it would be a lively twenty-mile ride through hostile country to Casablanca. The job might require a bit of quick thinking, here and there. And fortitude.

He went back to the jeep and spoke to Corporal Forbes. As he talked, his eye moved appraisingly over the short, square-set body and the firm face. Forbes, the colonel decided, would do. He looked like a man who would go anywhere and try anything.

On his side, Corporal Forbes may have done a little appraising of his own, noting the colonel's wide shoulders and lean body, the long-nosed, jutting-jawed Yankee face, with its bushy eyebrows and friendly, confident eyes.

Partners in a strange enterprise, these two undoubtedly looked each other over and were satisfied with what they saw.

Wilbur moved around the jeep, testing in turn the mountings of the flags attached to the car. There were a flag of the United States and a two-foot-flag of truce. In addition, there was a specially designed regimental banner. This display of flags might be of some protection.

"Once past the front-line area," Wilbur said to himself, "we should have little difficulty getting back to Casablanca."

He had no doubt of his ability to handle the French language. His three years in France shortly after World War I, during which time he had studied at the French Military School in St. Cyr and the École de Guerre in Paris, had taught him the French language and the working of the French military mind.

Yet it was a strange mission for a man with the peace-loving Quaker antecedents of Colonel Wilbur. His grandmother was a niece of the famed educator, Horace Mann. His great-grandfather was the celebrated Quaker leader, John Wilbur.

Born in Palmer, Massachusetts, September 24, 1888, the son of a doctor, William Hale Wilbur had no early ambition for a military career. He went to Haverford College, the Quaker school near Philadelphia, and might have graduated into some civilian pursuit if he hadn't received a telegram, one memorable Saturday, inviting him to become a candidate for West Point.

He hastily packed his clothes and boarded a train for the Academy. His examiners considered it noteworthy that young Wilbur, arriving at the Academy on Monday, without any previous preparation or "boning," passed the exhaustive examination with a high mark.

Once in the Academy, Wilbur found a soldier's career to his liking. He won his *A* as captain of the fencing team, and in 1912 was graduated a second lieutenant of infantry.

The years that followed brought a series of assignments in Panama, Paris, Hawaii, and various Army posts in this country. He served as instructor at West Point, as professor of military science and tactics at Boston University, and as Chief of Staff of the Sixth Corps Area in Chicago.

These were all classroom and administrative posts, and not too much to his liking. Field service was what he had always wanted.

Now, at last, he was getting it. After thirty-four years of Army life, he was going into action. He could hardly have asked for a more dangerous assignment. Instinctively he patted his tunic where he carried duplicate letters, signed by General George S. Patton, asking the French commander to avoid bloodshed by calling an immediate armistice.

Wilbur's eyes swept over the gently heaving sea, searching the other landing craft of the assault line. Not far away he could make out the dark silhouette of the next craft. This was the one that contained Lieutenant Viotti and another jeep. Viotti's mission was the same as Wilbur's. Each was to seek out the French commander independently, to give the mission a double chance of success.

Suddenly Wilbur's eyes widened. Even as he watched Viotti's craft, he saw it rise into the air by the bow, accompanied by a grinding, scraping noise. Horrified, he watched it turn on its side, dumping men and jeep into the black water. He heard the noise, and the frantic cries of men in the dark. Then he knew.

"Rocks!" he barked at his coxswain. "Reverse your screws!"

With an oath the coxswain yelled orders. The craft shuddered to a stop, water boiling at its stern. The nose of the craft scraped gently on submerged rocks, then began slowly to back away. Wilbur loosed a sigh of relief.

For a moment he took stock. Both to port and starboard he could hear cries and crashing noises, and he knew that other craft were running into trouble. There was no time to help these men. Succeeding assault waves would come along and rescue them. His orders were to push ahead with all possible speed.

Yet—where should he go? Barring the way were reefs where there should have been a sand beach. They were off course, but which way? North—or south?

"Cruise north," Wilbur commanded. "Look for an opening."

The craft gained headway, while Wilbur quickly studied charts, seeking any clue that would locate his exact position. For a short space they cruised northward while anxious eyes searched ahead and to the flank, seeking clear water.

"South," Wilbur ordered.

They put about and cruised the other way, passing close by other wrecked craft and calling out low words of encouragement. Presently they came to what seemed a clear channel to shoreward and tentatively the craft swung into it.

At that critical instant a searchlight from seaward sprang to life and caught them full in its glare. In the sudden light, Wilbur could plainly see the sand beach ahead of them. From somewhere in the dark, a machine gun opened up, and Wilbur heard the snap of bullets hitting the water astern of the craft.

"Full speed ahead," he ordered sharply. "Keep your heads down."

He glanced back at the seaward light. "Could that be one of our own destroyers?" he asked half aloud.

If so, it was a bad mistake. It gave away the whole party. The element of surprise was gone forever. Defenses would be alerted and there would be trouble on the beach.

Even as he was growling inwardly at the bad turn matters had taken, the seaward light was blacked out. (Later he learned that the searchlight had come from a French corvette. The light went out when an American ship came up and took a hand.)

All this time, Forbes had been vainly stepping on the starter of the jeep, sweating profusely and muttering under his breath. Now, as the craft approached the shore, he lifted the hood and found the carburetor flooded with gasoline.

The keel scraped sand and the ramp dropped with a clank and a thud.

"It won't start," Forbes said dismally.

"We'll push it ashore," Wilbur replied.

All hands took hold, dragging the lifeless jeep down the ramp, through the shallow water, and onto hard sand. There Wilbur and Forbes frantically fell to, working over the balky engine, mopping up gasoline, testing wires, fiddling with carburetor and distributor.

There was no fire, no challenge to their activities. If this part of the beach was, in fact, defended, then the defenders were for some reason holding their fire. Waiting, perhaps, for the Americans to make the first move.

Other craft came ashore in succeeding waves, and from one of them a jeep rolled onto the beach under its own power, its engine purring sweetly. Wilbur walked over to it.

"I'll take this car," he said shortly. "Get it unloaded, and Forbes! Strap our flags to this car and wait for me. I'm going ahead to contact the French."

From scale map studies aboard ship, Wilbur knew the land hereabouts as well as if he had vacationed at Fedala in times of peace. They were a short distance north of the town. The beach, here, was perhaps two hundred yards wide. Beyond the beach were low dunes. Somewhere in the dunes he should be able to find a French forward position.

While Forbes worked at the flags and the infantry began forming in a skirmish line for the advance, Wilbur strode ahead into

the darkness, out in front and alone. His job was to stop this fight before it had well started. There was no time to lose.

Some sixty yards from the first dune he dropped to the sand and crawled. As he approached the base of the dune he heard movement and low voices coming from only a few yards away. He had crept up to a French outpost and so far had been unobserved.

"Now is the time," he thought to himself.

It was the critical moment of his venture—his first contact with the enemy. Success or failure hung upon what happened in the next few seconds.

Getting to his feet, he stepped around the shoulder of the dune and found himself looking down on a machine gun surrounded by dark-skinned Senegalese soldiers. In perfect French, without a trace of accent, he addressed the soldiers with the informal comradeship of a French officer talking to his men:

"Good day, my friends. You're well, this morning?"

The men sprang respectfully to their feet, thinking they were talking to one of their own line officers.

"*Oui, merci, mon capitaine,*" the noncom in charge replied.

There were murmurs of "*Americaïn*," as the soldiers suddenly realized the identity of the man before them. For an instant, the air breathed with the threat of violence. In the tense atmosphere, Wilbur's voice was calm.

"Thousands of Americans at this moment are landing on the shore," he told the little group, "but they come as friends of France. We are here to liberate France."

The tension relaxed and the men listened. In a tone of authority, Wilbur told the noncom that he wished to be taken to the man's captain. He also requested the noncom to send two soldiers down to the beach, find a jeep with flags mounted on it, and bring it here. It would be entirely safe, he said. The American would not fire first.

While the two Senegalese uncertainly moved beachward to comply with the request, Wilbur and the noncom were moving rearward through the dunes until they came to the French command post. Here, in the darkness, a shocked French officer found himself talking to an American colonel bearing all the insignia of his rank.

Briefly Wilbur explained his mission, taking care to point out the futility of resistance.

"Who is your colonel?" he asked.

"Colonel Hogard," the officer replied.

"Please conduct me to him. Meanwhile, pull your company back and put it in barracks."

He said this in a matter-of-fact tone, as though he expected the order to be obeyed.

As they talked, the grind of an engine sounded, and the jeep containing Forbes and the Senegalese loomed up at the command post. Something in the calm authority of Wilbur's manner compelled the French officer to comply with his request to be conducted to Colonel Hogard.

As they proceeded rearward, they reached a road running north out of Fedala. At the same time, the infantry's first line of skirmishers reached the road. At that moment a car roared out of Fedala's outskirts and sped by them. Wilbur noted the frantic, reckless speed of the car and knew instinctively that this was something that must be stopped.

A second car was coming toward them, careening with the speed of a gangster's getaway. Wilbur turned to the nearest soldier.

"Get out in the road and stop that car!" he commanded. "If it doesn't stop, shoot!"

The soldier leaped out, waving his arms. The pace of the car continued unslackened. The soldier leaped out of the way just in time, leveled his gun, and fired. Other guns opened up. The car faltered for a moment, then regained its roar and bounced and swung on its way. (Later Wilbur learned that these two cars and other following autos contained members of the German armistice commission. Not one of them escaped capture.)

For a few minutes there was a lively flurry of action. Parts of the American skirmish line, thinking that the French had opened fire, were shooting back. Wilbur's party took cover, waiting for the action to subside. Finally the noise died down and the party continued on its way toward Fedala.

At the regimental command post, Colonel Hogard listened with a thoughtful frown to Wilbur's story. Finally he summoned an officer and introduced him.

"This is Captain Appler," he said. "He will conduct you to Casablanca." To Appler, he said: "Take the colonel to the headquarters of Admiral Ronarch and General Desre."

"The captain can ride with me in the jeep," Wilbur suggested cordially.

Appler shook his head. "I will take one of our own staff cars," he said.

Wilbur understood. An American jeep containing American soldiers was an open invitation to any French gunner. You could hardly blame a Frenchman for not wanting to ride in an enemy vehicle on the day of an American invasion.

"Strap the flag of truce to Captain Appler's car," Wilbur ordered Forbes.

This done, the procession started, with the jeep taking the lead and the French staff car following. It occurred to Wilbur as they moved southward that the jeep was taking all the risk. So be it. In this unusual mission it was highly important that Wilbur accept all danger without showing the slightest trace of doubt or fear.

As they swung inland around Fedala and rode swiftly southward, Wilbur noted the low, flat countryside. The first traces of dawn revealed the low ridge of land that protected the port of Fedala to seaward, and Wilbur saw that this ridge commanded all the countryside, including the beaches on which Americans were landing. The machine guns that had fired on his landing craft had probably been mounted on the point of this ridge.

"Look, Colonel," Forbes said.

Down the white road, a patrol of mounted Spahis was coming their way.

"Keep on going," the colonel ordered.

As the jeep approached the leading horsemen, Wilbur felt the need for some kind of gesture to disarm the enemy. Rising to his feet, he bowed briefly and saluted.

The leading Spahis returned the salute, and then the jeep was past them, leaving a thin trail of dust as it continued onward toward Casablanca.

Now a column of infantry showed up in the distance, a mounted officer at its head. Wilbur wondered what he would do if he were in the officer's place.

The officer did nothing at all. As the jeep went past the column, Wilbur could plainly see the look of surprise on the officer's face, and the lifting of a shoulder as if to ward off a blow. Inwardly Wilbur smiled. Things were going smoothly.

"Captain Appler's car," Forbes offered, "isn't bothering to keep very close."

Wilbur had noticed that. He could sense in the fact an attitude that seemed to say: "This is your party. Go ahead and take the consequences."

It was full daylight as they approached the outskirts of Casablanca, with the French car far to the rear. Ahead of them was a road block consisting of several trucks standing athwart the highway, placed so that a car could wind in and out through them at slow speed. In the field on one side of the road was a machine gun manned by two Senegalese. Standing near by was an officer. Wilbur knew there was no chance of getting past this point without a parley.

"Stop the car," he ordered Forbes.

As the colonel walked forward to greet the officer, Forbes looked nervously to the rear, watching for the French car.

Wilbur courteously addressed the French officer.

"I come as a friend of France—" he began.

The Frenchman turned abruptly to the gunners and ordered them to fire.

Something inside Wilbur froze. Outwardly, however, he continued to talk in calm tones, showing no sign that anything out of the ordinary had happened. Back at the jeep, Forbes prayed for Appler to hurry. The two gunners looked uncertainly at their officer and then to the defenseless American standing squarely before the muzzle of their gun.

"I have a message to deliver to your commanding officers in Casablanca," Wilbur was saying quietly. "I have an escort who will be here—"

The officer turned to his gunners with an impatient gesture.

"Fire!" he commanded.

Still the soldiers hesitated. Wilbur faced imminent death and stood his ground. Any outward sign of panic might release a stream of bullets. By this time Appler's car had stopped and the captain was coming forward.

The machine-gun officer turned upon his men, berating them for their lack of discipline. A third time he gave the command to fire and a third time the soldiers, with a life at the mercy of their fingertips, were unable to obey. By this time Appler had reached the spot, and the tension eased.

Wilbur decided that this was his lucky day. He moved over easily to join the conversation and before long he and Appler had overruled the exasperated officer's objections and were permitted to proceed.

As they entered the cobbled streets of the city, Wilbur saw ominous signs of beginning hostilities. A French cruiser, black smoke pouring from its funnels, was speeding out of the harbor to engage the American fleet. In the sky above the city were puffs of anti-aircraft fire. United States planes, then, were over the city. The two Americans, in the very center of enemy resistance, felt that the world was about to explode.

Sounds on the street brought Wilbur's gaze back to earth. Civilians lining the street were pointing at the United States flag on the jeep and cheering. A feeling of warmth surged through Wilbur's veins. He waved to them, smiling. The people, at least, were friendly.

In the court outside of the headquarters building the two-car procession came to a stop. Wilbur addressed the officer of the guard.

"I wish to see Admiral Ronarch and General Desre," he said.

"Wait here," the man replied. "I will learn if they wish to talk to you."

Wilbur wasn't in a mood to wait. He could already hear the sound of gunfire. Things were beginning to happen. Following at the heels of the guard officer he found himself presently in a room containing desks behind which two high officers were sitting.

With all possible authority and persuasiveness, Wilbur delivered his message, meanwhile drawing from his tunic the official envelopes bearing the duplicate messages from General Patton. He attempted to hand an envelope to one of the two impassive listeners.

The officer held up his hand in abrupt refusal.

"We have no authority to receive it."

"Who *does* have the authority?"

"Admiral Michelier."

"Where is he?"

"In the Admiralty Building."

Wilbur saluted smartly and swung about. As he approached the door he inconspicuously dropped one of the letters on a table. Then he was gone.

"They'll read it," he told himself, as he hurried through the corridor. "It will be unofficial, but they'll read it."

Outside, he told Appler that he was to be taken to Michelier. Appler was distressed.

"Listen," he said.

Wilbur heard the booming concussion of an exploding bomb and felt the earth vibrate under his feet.

"That was down near the Admiralty," Appler said significantly.

"All the more reason to hurry," Wilbur replied.

They got into their cars and drove through the streets toward the waterfront. From out beyond the harbor, Wilbur could hear the distant sounds of battle, and knew that the French Navy was engaged with the Americans. As they came closer to the Admiralty, he could hear the throbbing passage of large-caliber shells from United States Navy guns, arching down into the city. The battle was joined in all its fury.

A half block ahead of them was the entrance to the Admiralty courtyard. As the jeep approached it, a salvo of bombs landed squarely in front of the building, ripping up the street and filling the air with dust and fragments. Through the debris the tiny car slid to a stop, and the next moment Wilbur was striding through the acrid fumes into the courtyard, supremely indifferent to danger.

He saluted the officer on guard, informing him that he came as a friend of France and wished to deliver a message from the American commanding general to Admiral Michelier.

As he talked, the air split apart above his head. The courtyard rocked under a direct bomb hit, and French sailors ran for the cellars. Through the drifting fumes, Wilbur could see several French marines lying on the stones of the court, wounded.

The officer of the guard, pale and shaken, swung an ironic hand toward the wounded men. "You call that an act of friendship?" he asked scornfully.

Wilbur ignored the thrust. "I insist that you let me see the Admiral," he pressed.

Finally the officer departed. While he was gone, Wilbur looked round to see the loyal Forbes standing at his elbow. There were no Frenchmen in sight. Sensibly they were all in shelters.

"While we were in the courtyard," Forbes testified later, "more bombs fell. As Americans, the Colonel and I stood calmly, but the French all ducked."

The two waited, while the earth rocked about them. A 16-inch shell from an American battleship hurtled into the stone courtyard and quivered, not thirty feet from where the two lonely Americans stood. No crater opened. The shell was a dud. The two men looked at each other, sweated a little, and stood their ground.

The guard officer returned. "Admiral Michelier will not see you."

"He *must* see me," Wilbur responded. "All this can be stopped. Any resistance is a needless sacrifice of lives between friends. Tell the Admiral that I insist—" . .

Exasperated, the officer departed for a second try. More bombs fell, the shelling increased in tempo, and Wilbur and Forbes stood squarely on the bull's-eye of the target, quietly "taking it." Presently, during a momentary lull, the guard officer returned.

"The Admiral says that if the American officer doesn't go, he will be thrown into irons."

There was nothing more to be done. Regretfully Wilbur turned and walked through the littered, blood-stained court to the street. As the jeep moved away from the Admiralty, a bomb landed on the other side of a near-by stone wall, tossing the light jeep against the opposite curb. Later, Wilbur found fragments of cobblestones lying on the floor of the jeep, mute souvenirs of his flying trip to Casablanca.

At the outskirts of town, Captain Appler considered his duties as escort finished. There he bade the Americans good-by, if not good luck. Wilbur and Forbes faced a twenty-mile return trip through hostile territory, alone, without protection of any kind.

As they moved north under the midmorning sun, they passed French skirmish lines advancing into reserve and support positions for the beachhead battle at Fedala. Shots snapped past their car.

A voice called upon them to halt, and Forbes pressed the accelerator down to the floorboard.

Near the southern edge of Fedala, the car momentarily slowed as Wilbur studied the ridge of land jutting out into the water. He could plainly see the snouts of coastal guns rearing themselves from their concrete emplacements to fire across the harbor at the American beachheads. An inner voice told him that the landing party was in serious trouble.

"We've got to stop *that!*" said Wilbur grimly, gesturing at the busy guns. "But first, we have to make a break through their front positions. Don't stop for anything until you get into our lines."

The jeep took the inland road past the town. As they neared the indefinite area of no-man's land, Forbes put on all speed. They raced past French field positions, through a scattering of shots, into United States territory. Very soon the jeep was pulling to a stop north of town, at a point opposite the landing beaches.

There Wilbur could see at first hand the havoc being wrought by the coast artillery guns. Wrecked barges lined the beach. Unloading operations were at a standstill. The attack had bogged down and the outcome of the Fedala attack hung in the balance. And all the trouble could be traced to the coastal guns on the ridge south of town.

At Blue Beach 2, Wilbur found five tanks commanded by Lieutenant John M. Rutledge. Quickly Wilbur learned the disposition of such American troops as had come ashore. The first battalion of the attacking infantry regiment had proceeded one-third of the way through the town. Rutledge's tanks were about to explore the territory inland, according to previous orders.

"We've got to silence the fort on the ridge," Wilbur told Rutledge. "That's the first and most important job."

By radio, he reported to General Patton that he had returned safely from Casablanca after leaving the armistice message with Ronarch and Desre. Then he proceeded to organize an attack on the coastal guns. With Rutledge he advanced to Fedala where he found the major in charge of the attacking battalion.

"You move through the town," Wilbur instructed, "keeping your right flank on the water's edge. I'll go with the tanks inland, through the edge of town and take care of any opposition on

that flank. We'll meet at the base of the ridge in twenty minutes and attack the fort together."

While the infantry formed for attack the tanks rumbled forward on the inland route. Behind them came Forbes in his jeep, refusing to be left behind. For a few hundred yards nothing happened, but halfway to their objective, machine gun bullets suddenly spattered against the sides of the tanks and into the ground in front. Colonel Wilbur was riding atop the lead tank behind the doubtful protection of the turret. He leaped to the ground and ran for the nearest house. Rutledge followed close behind.

With unbelievable agility for a man of fifty-four years, Wilbur pulled himself to the roof of the house and crawled up to the ridge, where he peered cautiously in the direction of the machine-gun fire. Bullets smacked into the roof within a foot of where he lay.

"There are two pairs of .50-caliber guns up there," Wilbur called to Rutledge. "They're on the ridge, a little south of the fort."

Rutledge climbed up beside the colonel and spotted the French guns for himself. The two men slid off the roof, dropped to the ground, and hurried back to the tanks. Leading the tanks to a park on the other side of the street, Rutledge placed them behind a slight swell of ground, where their 37-mm. gun turrets had a clear view of the machine-gun nest. Then, methodically, he proceeded to lay down a barrage that effectively silenced the guns.

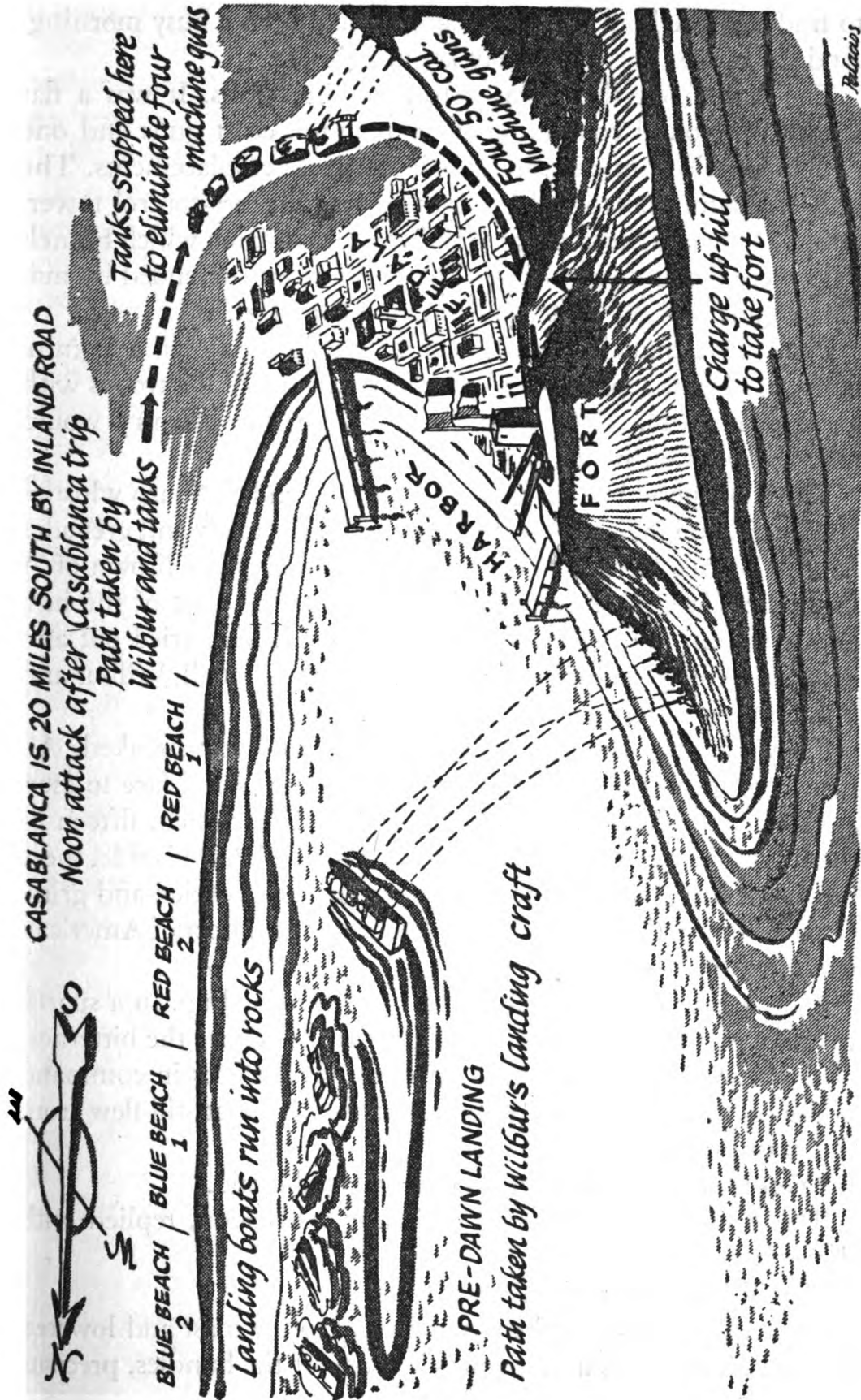
As the tanks prepared to move on, Rutledge said: "I have a wounded man in the lead tank—injured by the muzzle blast of a 37."

Wilbur beckoned abruptly to Forbes. "Take him back in your jeep."

Forbes' face fell. He had wanted to see this through. Reluctantly he saluted and turned away.

The tanks moved on through the town with Wilbur walking ahead to each street intersection to reconnoiter the way. With little further opposition they rumbled to the base of the hill leading to the fort, arriving there ten minutes behind schedule.

As they waited behind the protection of a row of houses, the advance element of infantry appeared in the streets, moving cautiously from doorway to doorway. Wilbur looked at his watch



to find that the hour was only noon. It had been a busy morning. And the busiest part of the day lay just ahead.

The fort above them was a fort without walls. It was a flat stretch of ground containing three 100-mm. coast guns and one double-barreled anti-aircraft gun in concrete emplacements. The only structure that rose above ground was the fire-control tower. Atop the tower Wilbur could plainly see a mast from which French flags were defiantly fluttering. The position was defended by machine guns and an undetermined number of rifles.

Plans were quickly laid. The tanks would lay down a 37-mm. barrage. Machine guns would cover the advance of the troops with a protecting fire. After a little preparation, the infantry would take the position by assault.

The short period of preparation was soon ended. Sharp whistles cut the air, and men ran for the hill, guns at the ready and grenades handy. Wilbur himself led the charge, with Captain Brown of A Company close by. Fire poured down from the crest of the hill, and fire from the American flanks answered. Men cried out and dropped to the ground. The rest ran on. Through it all, Wilbur and a dwindling number of men raced for the top.

They ran into the fort area, panting and sweat-streaked. All firing abruptly stopped as the opposing groups stood face to face, at rifle length. Wilbur counted some fifty Frenchmen, fifteen of them lying dead, nearly all the others wounded. On his side, there were five American officers and fifteen men, disheveled and grim. On the slope of the hill were an indeterminate number of American wounded and dead.

Such prisoners as were able to stand were lined up. In a sportsmanlike gesture that he hoped might help to relieve the bitterness of defeat, Wilbur turned to the French naval officer in command of the battery, meanwhile gesturing at the flags that still flew from the mast on the control tower.

"You may leave your flags on the mast," he said.

The Frenchman, wounded and near exhaustion, replied with dignity:

"I will take down the flags myself."

Helped by two sailors he somehow got to the mast and lowered the flags. There was a moment when one of the bundles, precious

to the pride of the French Navy, threatened to fall to the ground. Colonel Wilbur instinctively stepped forward to rescue it. In that instant he felt a harsh hand on his forearm and turned to look into the enraged face of a sailor.

"Ne touchez pas!" this man thundered.

Wilbur stepped back, chastened, while wounded Frenchmen disposed of their flags, allowing nobody else even to touch the fabric.

With the taking of the fort all effective resistance at Fedala ended. Twenty miles south, at Casablanca, the fight continued until November eleventh. France's great battleship, *Jean Bart*, was bombed and torpedoed, and there was fierce resistance on water and land before the French bowed to superior forces.

On December 1, 1942, Colonel Wilbur was promoted to brigadier general. In January of the New Year, he made a brief visit to the lawn of President Roosevelt's villa at Casablanca, during the President's conference with Churchill. There he received from his Commander-in-Chief the Medal of Honor, the first Medal of Honor in history to be presented by the President on foreign soil to a soldier of the United States.

Corporal Forbes received the DSC, was promoted to sergeant, and months later found a soldier's grave in Sicily.

General Wilbur went on to give exceptional service and receive new honors: the Legion of Merit for directing training centers in North Africa; the Silver Star "for gallantry in action at Salerno, Italy, on the 12th to 20th of September, 1943. General Wilbur," the citation states, "took command of a defensive position and went ahead with infantry, tanks, and tank destroyer forces, welding them into a fighting force that met and successfully smashed an infantry and tank attack at a crucial period of this operation."

General Wilbur, descendant of Quakers and educators, was merely running true to form. Fellow officers, veterans of Salerno and Casablanca, say that they gain confidence from Wilbur's calmness under fire, and inspiration from his aggressive, offensive-minded heart. An officer who was with him at Fedala says:

"The most striking example of leadership under fire I've ever witnessed."

And that is the soldier's perfect tribute to a soldier.

Major Hamilton and Colonel Craw

TWO MEN IN SEARCH OF PEACE



At Port Lyautey, French Morocco, November 8-11, 1942

THERE is nothing more democratic in the United States Army than the roll call of the Medal of Honor. In the pages of this book are the stories of truck drivers, farm laborers, poultrymen, furriers, high school students, career soldiers and sons of wealth. Valor belongs to no class.

The story to be told in this chapter concerns itself with three men: a West Pointer, an international businessman, and a small-town boy from Evarts, Michigan. These three were to take a ride together in a jeep. At the end of the ride, two of them were to win the Medal of Honor, and the third was to receive the Distinguished Service Cross. One of the party was to find a soldier's grave.

It's a strange story, compounded of tragedy, humor, and unbelievable incident. It has its musical comedy touches. It could only have happened on the shore of North Africa on November 8, 1942.

On the eve of November 8, thousands of ships were steaming through the sea, approaching the shores of Africa. One fleet of the giant armada, the sub-task force commanded by Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., was headed for the summer resort called Mehdiya Plage, alongside the river Sebou. Five miles inland on this river was the busy grain shipping center of Port Lyautey.

On board the flagship, two staff officers stayed up all night, planning the Lyautey counterpart of the mission to be undertaken at Casablanca by Colonel William H. Wilbur. One of the officers was Army Air Force Major Pierpont M. Hamilton, graduate of Groton and Harvard, who knew the French language like a native, from having lived many years in Paris. The other was Air Force Colonel Demas T. Craw, West Pointer, in command of the air section of the task force.

On the table in the commanding officer's cabin lay a roll of parchment, bearing a message written in a flowing hand. It was a plea to the French officer in command of the troops at Lyautey not to resist the American landing. Tomorrow, at dawn, when the assault wave landed, Hamilton and Craw were to take a jeep ashore and try to deliver this message to the French commanding officer. Private Orrin V. Corey was assigned to drive the jeep.

Originally, Major Hamilton had volunteered for the mission. His knowledge of French fitted him well for it. But when Colonel Craw heard about it, he went straight to General Truscott and asked permission to go along.

"You're too valuable," Truscott demurred. "It's a risky assignment, and you're in charge of my air force. We can't take a chance on you."

Craw replied that he had capable subordinates to run the air show, which could not get under way at best until the Lyautey airfield had been captured. Their plans were all laid and his staff could carry them out as well as he.

In the end, Truscott relented. Craw had been in countless adventures and escaped with hardly a scratch. Craw was indestructible. He and Hamilton would make a good team. Between them, the mission was more certain of success.

Nick Craw's career seemed to justify the idea that he was indestructible. Born in Traverse City, Michigan, April 9, 1900, Craw enlisted in the Army on his seventeenth birthday and went to the Mexican border with the Twelfth Cavalry. There he went A.W.O.L. in order to take part in a skirmish at Nogales.

His officers found out shortly afterwards that he was too young to fight and discharged him from the Army. When he reached his eighteenth birthday he enlisted again, went to France with the Third Division, saw action on the Marne and in the Argonne, and returned a second lieutenant.

Craw wanted to make a career of the Army. In order to enter West Point, he sacrificed his temporary commission, got himself reduced to enlisted man, went to night school, and finally passed his West Point exams. He entered the Academy in 1920.

At West Point, he went in head over heels for sports. He played everything: football, cross-country running, boxing, lacrosse, and

polo. He was captain of the polo team and received the Heiberg Cup, symbolic of excellence in horsemanship. This left him so little time for books that a classmate used to wake him up in the wee hours before dawn, take him into the washroom (the only room where lights were permitted at night) and tutor him.

He graduated from the Academy a lieutenant of infantry but soon got himself transferred to the Air Corps and in time became a pursuit pilot.

It was at West Point that he acquired the name of "Nick." He had never liked the biblical name of "Demas," given him by his parents. So when his classmates began to call him Nicodemus at West Point, and then shortened it to "Nick," the change suited him fine. Nick Crow he has been ever since.

In the years that followed, he moved from flying field to flying field, winning friendship and loyalty wherever he went. In Hawaii, the enlisted men of the Nineteenth Pursuit Squadron violated the Army rule against gifts by presenting him with a silver cocktail set.

In 1931, he married Miss Mary Victoria Wesson of Springfield, Massachusetts, who went with him on all his tours of duty, sharing his high enthusiasm for flying and polo.

When the European war broke out in 1939, Nick Crow was on the Air Corps staff in Washington. One day he was called in by the chief and told that he was to go to Cairo as observer to the Royal Air Force. From that moment his career was to become a story of fabulous adventure. This was the action he longed for, and he made the most of it.

He flew to Egypt in 1940 by way of Hawaii, Wake, the Philippines, Chungking, where he underwent his first air raid, Burma, India, and Egypt. When the Germans descended on Greece, Crow went to Athens with the RAF.

He wasn't content to be a desk observer, taking reports from others. Instead he lived and flew with the British officers, taking part in twenty-two operational flights against the Germans and Italians. Those were the days of poorly armored bombers, lack of fighter protection, and numerical weakness, and every flight was a flirtation with death.

When the RAF had to leave Athens a jump ahead of the on-

rushing Germans, Craw was told that a seat was waiting for him on a plane, but he refused, knowing that he would be robbing some British flier of passage to safety. If the British flier were captured he would be a prisoner of war. If Craw were taken, he would soon be set free as the official representative of a neutral country.

Yet Craw almost got out with the British. The night after the RAF had gone, a Greek and two British ground officers came to his room and told him they'd patched up an old two-engined Anson that they thought would fly. Would he take them to Crete?

"Sure," Nick replied.

They went to the field and worked from midnight till dawn on the old bomber. At dawn the Stukas came and found just one airplane on the field—the Anson. They came screaming down. Craw, the British officers, and the Greek ran for their lives.

"They really plastered us," Nick reported. "They killed the Greek and wounded one of the British. I never ran so fast in my life."

The Anson was destroyed and only one avenue of escape remained. Craw and the unharmed Britisher took the wounded man down to a seaport, but on the way they were captured by the fast-moving Germans and put in a concentration camp. It was a ticklish moment for Craw, taken as he was with the British and wearing borrowed bits of RAF uniform, but after several uncomfortable days he was identified by his West Point ring and set free.

There was a day in Athens during the occupation when an Italian major's car accidentally sideswiped Craw's. The major stepped out, enraged, ordered two soldiers to hold Craw's arms, then slapped his face. Craw wrenched himself free, delivered himself of one of his best short rights, and dropped the major to the street. One of the soldiers shifted his rifle to club Craw over the head but Craw beat him to the punch, stretching him out beside his major.

At this point a German officer came up to see what was wrong. Craw heatedly explained that the Italian had shown the bad grace to slap a neutral. Then he offered the major "satisfaction" anywhere, any time.

The major sensibly explained that he was going back to Albania very soon and was too busy to accept the offer.

"All I need," Crow retorted, "is ten square yards and one minute."

The major declined. Crow explained the incident to the American minister, Lincoln MacVeagh, and MacVeagh told the story to the Italian legation. The next day, the Italian major appeared at the American legation, decorated with a black eye, and read a formal apology.

From Athens, Crow went to Turkey, and his travels eventually brought him back to Washington. After only a short visit, he flew back to Africa to help plan the Ploesti oil field raid. Back again in Washington—in the summer of 1942—he pleaded with the authorities for his own bombing squadron and was delighted when told he could have a new formation of B-17's. But before he could take command he was called to headquarters and informed that he was sailing with General Truscott to take part in the African invasion.

Crow was a man of action, of fiery temperament yet good judgment. If he had lived any other life, it would still have been a life of adventure because he carried the spirit of adventure inside him. No trip, no task, no order was an ordinary one to him. He brought to each his own zest and vitality. His inner fire conveyed itself to others and inspired confidence.

The other member of the Lyautey venture brought a different background and a different kind of training to the task ahead. Pierpont M. Hamilton was born in Tuxedo, New York, on August 3, 1898, went to day school in New York City until 1911, attended Groton School, and entered Harvard in the fall of 1916. On the day war was declared—April 3, 1917—he left school and enlisted in the aviation section of the Signal Corps.

Since he had to wait until his nineteenth birthday for assignment, he spent the summer helping his brother-in-law, Colonel Arthur Wood, police commissioner of New York City, to organize a wartime harbor patrol.

To the modern flight student, it will come as a shock to learn that at Hazelhurst Field, Long Island, young Hamilton was allowed to solo after just forty minutes of dual flight instruction.

Hamilton was ordered overseas in October, 1917, but came down with a three-month siege of ptomaine poisoning. He was sent to Ellington Field, Houston, Texas, where he completed his training

and was commissioned second lieutenant on April 8, 1918. He was retained at Ellington as an instructor, organized the country's first course in blind flying, was promoted to first lieutenant in September, and served for a time at Air Service headquarters in Washington.

In the years between the two wars, Hamilton served in the foreign department of a New York bank, spent six years in Paris with an international banking house, and then returned to New York to go into business for himself, promoting and developing new ideas, mostly in the field of color and sound photography.

In 1938 he became president of Dufay Color, Inc., American subsidiary of an English parent company that was developing a simplified process for color photography.

Like Craw, Hamilton got into the war before Pearl Harbor. From 1939 to 1941 many American boys, restless for action, were applying for service in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Hamilton helped set up the Canadian Aviation Bureau, to test and pass upon these American applicants for foreign flying service.

Then the United States was bombed into the war and in March, 1942, Pierpont Hamilton was reappointed to active duty with the USAAF. His three sons also entered service. Philip became an aviator in the United States Naval Reserve. David won his first lieutenantcy in the Air Force and went overseas as a pilot. Ian entered the Marine Corps, slated for flight training. The father served in the summer of 1942 in London as one of the United States officers attached to Lord Louis Mountbatten's Combined Operations staff, at which time he participated in the planning of the famous Dieppe raid. In October he came back to this country to join General Patton's Western Task Force. Now, as a member of General Truscott's staff, waiting off the coast of French Morocco, he was planning with Nick Craw for a Sunday morning ride in a jeep.

In the predawn blackness of Sunday morning, November eighth, the flagship got busy. Landing craft went overside, lowered by gaunt derricks, and men let themselves hand over hand down the netting. One landing barge had in it a jeep loaded with rations and ammunition. The only enlisted men in this craft were the crew

of the barge, and Private Corey of Evarts, Michigan, driver of the jeep.

After final instructions from General Truscott, a personal friend of both men, Colonel Craw and Major Hamilton climbed down to the deck of the barge. In the jeep they had three furled flags, an American flag, a French, and a white flag of truce. In a briefcase, Hamilton had the message from Truscott to the commanding officer of the French. Hamilton and Craw wore sidearms that they hoped they wouldn't have to use. Their mission was one of peace, but they had to be ready to fight.

In the darkness of the heaving Atlantic other ships were lowering troops, jeeps, bulldozers, and mobile artillery into landing craft. Engines were roaring to life and prows were veering toward the invisible coast four or five miles away.

There was no wind, no boom and flash of guns. The world was dark and silent as the invasion commenced. Hamilton thanked providence for the calmness of the sea. Surf ran high on this open Atlantic shore, and a high surf could easily make it impossible for the invasion barges to reach the beach.

Their barge got under way, not far behind the landing craft of the Sixtieth Infantry assault waves. Their objectives, however, were not the same. The infantry was to land on the beach of the summer resort known as Mehdia Plage and capture it. Craw and Hamilton were to head for the mouth of the river Sebou (Wadi Sebou in the language of the Moroccans) and follow it inland to Port Lyautey.

"Riding up the river to Lyautey," Hamilton says, "seemed a nice, dignified way to reach French headquarters."

When they were three-quarters of a mile off the mouth of the river, the world burst into flame. By this time, a hazy sunless dawn revealed the black outlines of the Moroccan hills. Against this blackness came flashes from the muzzles of French batteries. To seaward there were other flashes from our destroyers and the air overhead became a curtain of sound.

Although it was hardly light enough to distinguish the mouth of the river from the general shoreline, Hamilton knew they were on course by the yellowish tinge of muddy water, carried out to the ocean by the current of the Sebou. Presently they could make:

out the immense stone jetties that thrust themselves into the sea on either side of the Sebou.

As they drew closer to the river mouth, spouts of water leaped up close to the barge. The French were shelling the river mouth. Closer in, the invaders detected tiny spurts of machine-gun fire striking the water's surface.

The barge veered over to the stone jetty on the southern bank and stopped in its protection while the officers debated what to do. It was getting lighter, now. Up river a short distance they could detect a line of buoys apparently supporting a submarine net, and the channel between the jetties was boiling with bursting shells.

There was no chance of getting past the net. The only thing to do was swing out to sea again and land on the beach of the resort. As they approached the northern end of the beach they could see more landing craft to the south, and infantry running across the strip of sand. Down there, too, a bulldozer was coming ashore.

Corey started the jeep and shifted gear to low-low. The landing barge grounded on the sand and the sailors dropped the ramp with a thump and a splash. The jeep roared down the ramp.

Hamilton wasn't on the jeep when it leaped ahead. The three flags had rolled off into the barge. He gathered them up, ran down the ramp, jumped into knee-deep water and splashed ashore.

The jeep hadn't got far. It had gone over the first hard, water-packed strip of sand and down into the brackish overflow beyond. There it was stuck, its wheels churning, digging deeper into muck. Craw was out pushing. Corey was rocking it.

Hamilton stowed the flags in the back of the jeep and put his shoulder to the car body. While they were sweating at this job, wondering when a hail of bullets would come their way, a French pursuit plane roared out of the skies and cut loose with its guns.

The three men leaped for the shelter of a dune. Other planes appeared and for a moment the little party was busy jumping to the safe side of dunes, burying their heads in sand, and praying. Between strafing runs they went back to the jeep, trying to dislodge it from the sand.

They might never have got it out if the bulldozer down the beach hadn't noticed their predicament and come up to lend a

hand. A chain and hook were attached to the front axle and presently the jeep was on a macadam road, ready to continue its journey.

First, Corey removed the waterproofing attachments of the car. These were coverings for engine and wires, a vertical extension of the exhaust pipe, and other kinds of protection to permit the jeep to travel through shallow water without flooding its internal machinery. This done, the men got in and started their trip, following the turns through the resort as surely as if they had lived there all their lives. On the ship they had spent hours studying accurate scale models of the area, until they felt that they could recognize every landmark, every building and crossroad.

Now the shells began to explode ahead of and behind them. Some of them came from destroyers offshore. Others came from French batteries that were shelling the beach area.

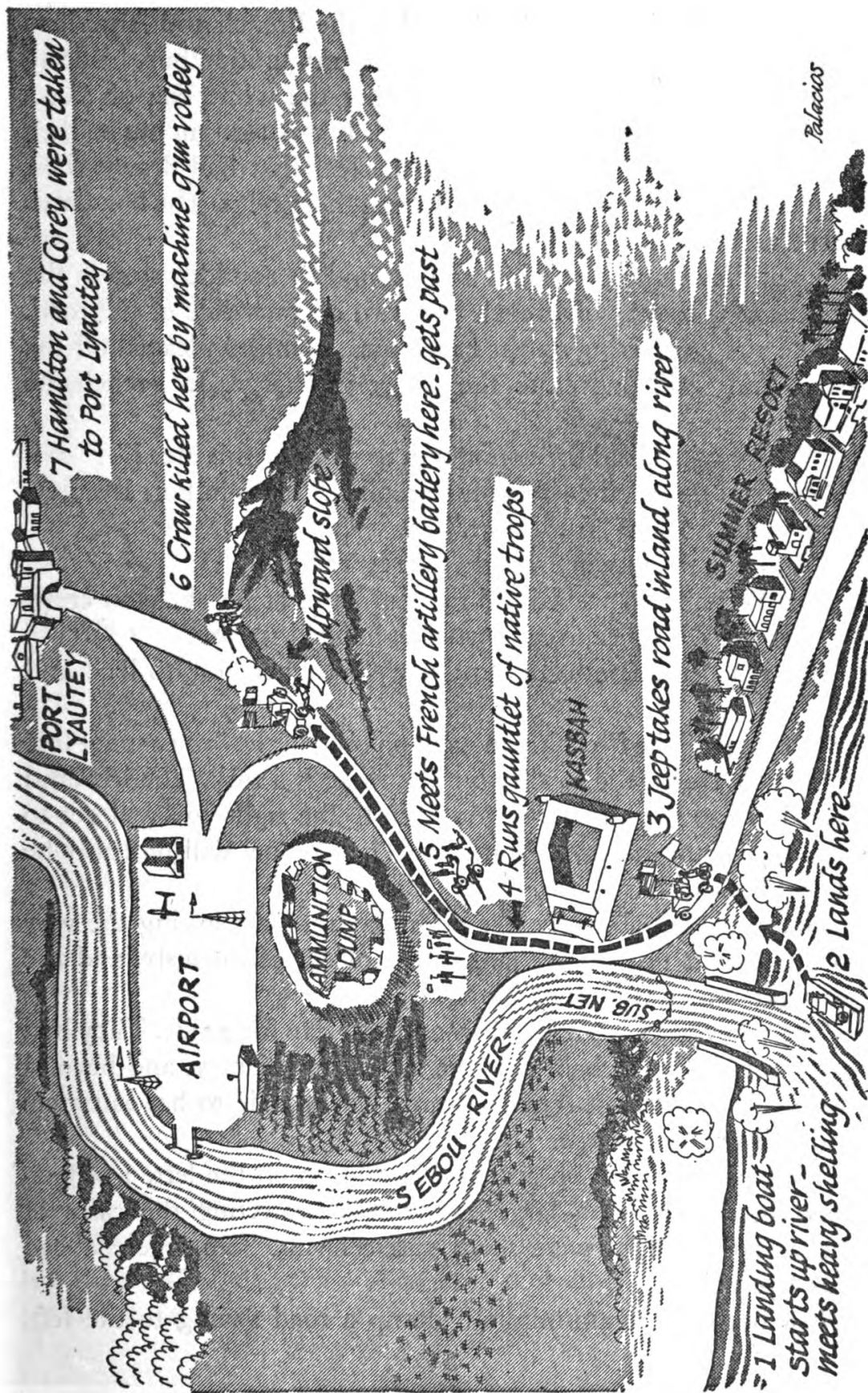
"Dammit," Craw called into the radio, as they started inland. "we're being shelled by both you and the French!" That was the last message General Truscott received from his diplomatic mission for several days. .

Near the river's bank the road swung inland, following the Sebou toward an ancient sixteenth century Portuguese fort. This fort, or kasbah, was an imposing structure of stone. On the river side, it descended to the water in a series of terraced gun emplacements and the road led directly through and beneath this part of the fort to the hills beyond. Destroyer shells were bursting on and around the fort, some of them perilously close to the jeep.

They rode straight through, past stone walls and emplacements, and no Frenchman challenged them. Emerging beyond the fort, they saw a detachment of native French troops. These soldiers were crawling in two files, in the ditches on either side of the road.

The jeep boldly rode past them, almost before either party was aware of the other.

It gave Hamilton a queer feeling. These soldiers were going up to engage the Sixtieth Infantry. Presently they would be shooting at Americans. Yet here he was, riding past them. In his embarrassment at the novelty of the situation he lifted a hand and waved to them. A Moroccan lifted his swarthy arm in instinctive reply. Then they were past each other, and still no challenge.



Craw sat beside Corey, holding aloft the French and American flags. Hamilton sat behind Craw on an ammunition box, his long legs dangling overside. He was bearing the white flag of truce. All three were beginning to feel good. It was turning out to be a nice morning for a ride. Some of the fear that had drawn their nerves tight began to leave them, letting them relax. The bombardment was now behind them.

Then they came over a hill and ground to a sudden stop in the middle of a battery of French 75's, two on each side of the road.

The 75's were firing on the beach area. Hamilton leaped off the truck and walked over to the officer in charge. In French, he asked:

"Where will I find the commanding office of this area?"

"Colonel ——?" the Frenchman replied. "He is in Port Lyautey. You will find him in the fort."

"Will you give us an escort to take us to him?"

The Frenchman waved a distracted hand at his skeleton crew.

"I'm sorry. You can see how short-handed we are."

It was true. There were hardly two men per gun, to load and fire.

"However," the Frenchman went on obligingly, "you cannot lose your way. Down the road two miles there is a fork. The lefthand road leads to the airport. If you keep to the right you will get to Lyautey. You can't possibly miss it. The Colonel will probably be at headquarters."

Hamilton felt absurdly like a Sunday motorist asking the way to the nearest town. He thanked the officer courteously, and the jeep got under way once more.

The party grew jubilant. It was a great day for a ride. They had got through the kasbah, past the attacking infantry, and beyond the artillery. All that remained now was to ride to headquarters and deliver the message.

They passed a French ammunition dump on the left, a permanent installation with large earthworks protecting the cases of shells. To the right were small native farms. Somewhere ahead was Lyautey.

Just beyond the ammunition dump a road swung to the left.

Following the artillery officer's instructions, the jeep kept to the right and began to climb a low hill.

At the top, where the road made a bend, a sudden burst of fire shattered the silence. Nick Craw was thrown against the driver. Flags dropped into the dusty road. The jeep slammed to a stop.

Hamilton leaped to the ground, pulled Nick up by the shoulders, and saw that a full burst of machine-gun fire had penetrated his chest in a compact pattern. Nick Craw was beyond all human aid.

Neither Corey nor Hamilton had been touched, although they had been almost shoulder to shoulder with Nick Craw. Blind anger shook Hamilton.

As he walked to the officer in charge of the machine gun that had opened fire, long-forgotten French imprecations found expression. He left the officer in no doubt of his feeling toward a soldier who would fire on a flag of truce.

The Frenchman was brusque. The machine gun was on the flank of an infantry skirmish line. Their function was to fire on anyone coming up the road. He disarmed Hamilton and Corey and attempted to take Hamilton's briefcase.

Hamilton refused to give it up, and demanded to be taken to the colonel. The two Americans were unceremoniously bundled into a staff car and taken to Lyautey, leaving behind them Nick Craw to keep silent watch over the jeep.

In the bare headquarters room of the French Colonel, Major Hamilton formally presented General Truscott's appeal. The colonel, a small, dapper career officer, read it and shook his head.

"A decision of this kind is not within my jurisdiction," he replied.

"Will you convey the message to the proper authority?" Hamilton asked.

The colonel telephoned the general of division at Mekness, sixty miles inland. The general refused to take the responsibility of calling off the fight but promised to take it up with a higher authority. Meanwhile, the emissaries were to be detained.

There was nothing to do but wait. Hamilton and Corey were made prisoners of war. It was an informal imprisonment. Hamilton was assigned a room and told to stay close to it. He was permitted

to move around, but a guard with a long bayonet was never more than six feet away from him.

Sunday night passed, and Monday came and went. Overheard phrases told Hamilton of the progress of the fighting. He guessed that the Sixtieth had encountered rough going on the beach and at the kasbah. Fragments of conversation told him that American tanks had made a daring foray toward the airport on the river bank, several miles inland. While all this was happening, he lost no opportunity to put pressure on the colonel to stop fighting.

Tuesday brought with it the strangest event of all. The French colonel and an orderly had gone on a tour of the French rear command posts. During the drive they had run into an American officer leading a patrol toward the airport. The American was much too far inland and obviously lost. With him was an unorganized detachment of De Gaullists, eager to attach themselves to American troops.

The colonel stepped out of his car and faced his captors.

"I'm your prisoner," he announced.

The American admitted the obvious fact, but pointed out that he wasn't sure he could get back to his own lines. Besides, he had a mission to perform. He was supposed to proceed to the airport. He didn't want to be bothered right now with a French colonel and his orderly, or for that matter with the increasing crowd of sympathizers already at his heels.

The colonel told him about Major Hamilton's being at the fort. The American officer saw a way out.

"I'll put you on your parole," he said. "You go back to Major Hamilton and put yourself under his orders. Give me your promise you'll take no further part in the fighting."

The colonel gave his word. He was disarmed and sent back toward Port Lyautey.

Thus it was that the officer in charge of the French at Lyautey appeared on Tuesday in Hamilton's room and announced that he was under Hamilton's orders from now on.

"In a way," Hamilton recalls with a grin, "this put me in command of the town of Port Lyautey, but with no means of communicating that fact to the American forces!"

He made use of his dubious authority by getting personally on

the phone to induce the French general to call off the war. By nightfall, the general agreed to an armistice meeting.

"Bring General Truscott to Lyautey," he said, "and we will talk terms."

This gave Hamilton an opening. "I brought my colonel here on Sunday," he pointed out, "and he was killed. Do you think I'm going to subject my general to the same risk?"

Hamilton then turned on the pressure. "All that is necessary is to give the order to cease resistance. As soon as you cease firing, we shall automatically stop. Then we can arrange a meeting with General Truscott."

Finally the general acceded. At ten o'clock that night, he said: "Very well. Put on Colonel —."

The colonel took the phone and received the order to cease fire.

The task remained of carrying out the order. French troops were scattered all over the surrounding landscape.

"I have no car available at the moment," the Frenchman said.

"Use the jeep," Hamilton replied. "Corey will drive it."

So they set out in the jeep to contact all possible French units. In the jeep were Corey, Hamilton, the colonel, and a bugler. The method of notifying the troops was to blow the "Cease fire" call on the bugle. This was a high-pitched, staccato call, something like the American cavalry charge.

With headlights full on, they rode through the night, over hills and into valleys, sounding the call wherever French troops could hear it. As they went the rounds, Hamilton kept his eye out for signs of an American detachment through which he could establish contact with General Truscott.

But they met no Americans except the same "lost" patrol and its now small army of followers.

"I understand our tanks have captured the airport," Hamilton suggested at last.

The colonel confirmed this. They swung the car round and took the road leading toward the big bend in the Sebou River.

As they came to a railroad crossing, Hamilton saw a sign beside the road bearing the words: "*Defense d'entrer.*" It was a warning to civilians not to approach the airport.

"Stop here," he commanded. "I'll get out and walk ahead of

the car. Keep the headlights on me and hold on to this white flag. We can't take any chances now, but I don't think our boys will fire on a flag of truce."

They approached the airport entrance at walking speed until Hamilton was challenged by an American voice:

"Who goes there?"

"Major Hamilton with the French commanding officer. We have orders for an armistice."

"Advance and be recognized."

Hamilton advanced alone to the improvised barrier where the officer in charge of the airport came forward with a flashlight. The two men knew each other.

"Thank God you stopped when you did," the officer said with what seemed to Hamilton unusual emotion.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Mean!" the captain burst out. "Take a look!"

He swung his flashlight in a wide arc behind him. There Hamilton saw six tanks arranged in a shallow semicircle. In front and behind them were all the soldiers who had captured the airfield, in skirmish line. Tank guns, machine guns, automatic rifles, tommy guns, and a few bazookas were all trained on the road.

"For the last hour," the captain said feelingly, "we've been seeing headlights flashing over the hills and hearing bugle calls. We didn't know what to make of it. We thought the whole French army was coming this way for some kind of a desperation counter-attack. If you hadn't stopped we'd have fired, sure as blazes."

Hamilton laughed. Then he looked again at the tanks and automatic rifles and felt his knees turn to rubber.

There remained the job of getting in touch with General Truscott. They entered one of the tanks and contacted the tank officer on the beach by radio. This man in turn rode across country to the general's command post, and presently Truscott and Hamilton were talking.

"The French have given the order to cease fire."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Absolutely. I got it personally from General —, and have been around with Colonel — myself, spreading the order." Then Hamilton told the incident of the colonel's capture and parole,

and went on to say: "In a way I'm in charge here, you see. General — wants to meet you tomorrow morning."

"What's the idea of bringing *him*?" Truscott quipped. "If you're in charge, come yourself and arrange the details."

Arrangements were made for a meeting at the Portuguese kasbah at eight o'clock the next day.

Hamilton and the colonel didn't bother to go to bed. When they had finished shaving and cleaning up, and discussing the events of the night, it was daylight.

General — arrived shortly afterwards, and a little before eight the procession started. In the lead was the jeep, with Corey driving. Then came a French staff car containing the general, the colonel, Hamilton, and two staff officers. At the kasbah they formally greeted General Truscott and his staff, and after the proper ceremonies were observed the armistice was signed.

The next day, on a low mound beside the old walls of the Portuguese fortress, these men buried their friend Nick Craw, the high-hearted venturesome leader of the strange mission to Lyautey. Today the cemetery is bordered by a white picket fence. Inside a small adjacent area are French graves. There are ninety-two American crosses, the price of a brief, bloody battle between friends. Just inside the gate, where Demas T. Craw lies, is the numeral "1," commemorating the first American to die on this Moroccan shore.

At the kasbah, American and French soldiers now stand guard together. The Lyautey airport has become a great American air base, symbolic of our progress toward victory. It is called "Craw Field."

In time, Hamilton and Craw were recommended for the Medal of Honor. Corey was promoted to corporal on the spot and recommended for the DSC. Later, he became a sergeant. The invasion successfully concluded, Hamilton went on to take part in the Tunisian campaign. Afterwards he returned to Washington to resume his duties on the Air Force staff.

The war is hardly likely to reveal a stranger adventure than that of these three men, who took a Sunday morning ride in a jeep, under a white flag and in search of peace.

Kenny Gruennert

TEAM PLAYER



At Buna Mission, New Guinea, December 24, 1942

BROWN-HAIRED, blue-eyed Kenneth E. Gruennert, mortar sergeant of L Company, 127th Infantry, accosted Sergeant Sparky Multhauff in a patch of jungle below Buna.

"That attack on the Island this morning," he said. "I'm going along."

"Captain say you could go?" Sparky wanted to know.

Kenny Gruennert, who couldn't bear to have things happening without being a part of them, went to Captain Wentland.

"Nothing doing," the captain said flatly. "If anything happened to you, the mortars would be without a sergeant."

The Island shortly to be attacked wasn't actually an island. It was merely a piece of the New Guinea coast between the town of Buna and Buna Mission. The first platoon was going over there this morning, either to take possession or find out how much opposition there was. To reach it, the platoon would have to cross a river that was a deep and treacherous channel of mucky tidal water. There was a bridge leading to the Island, but the bridge was Suicide Alley. The Japs had it well covered.

To make another bridge at a safer point, an engineer had dynamited a large tree on the bank, but the tree had perversely fallen the wrong way. So, the night before the attack, Sergeant Everett Warner volunteered to swim the muddy channel and stretch a wire to the other shore. Kenny Gruennert and Sparky Multhauff offered to help him, and at ten o'clock on the night of December 17, 1942, these three men stripped down to their shorts and dog-paddled across a stream that reputedly contained crocodiles, to moor a wire firmly to the other bank.

The next morning, Gruennert restlessly watched the men of the first platoon, most of them lifelong friends from around Helenville

and Jefferson, Wisconsin, getting ready for the attack. They wore soiled and shapeless fatigue suits, GI shoes, and helmets. Into combat packs and the pockets of their suits went C rations and grenades. Into belts and bandoliers went clips of ammunition.

At eleven in the morning, as they were about to start, Kenny came up to Multhauff.

"Don't tell the captain," he murmured, "but I got me a tommy gun and I'm going to sneak along anyhow."

With Lieutenant Hirsch in the lead, the platoon crept in file through the jungle until they came to the end of the wire on the bank. At the rear of the file were Captain Wentland, Lieutenant Mettendorf, and Sergeant Multhauff.

Just before they located the wire, Lieutenant Hirsch half-spun and cried out in pain. The eyes of the platoon snapped upward, searching for the sniper who had fired on the head of the column. They had learned, by this time, to expect a sniper's bullet any time, any place. While first-aid men attended the wounded officer, Multhauff took his place at the head of the file. Sliding into the water, he swam across the stream, holding tight to the wire to prevent the weight of gun and ammunition from dragging him under water.

Another noncom came right behind, and when the two reached the far bank, they took shelter behind a mound of dirt and directed the next few men to deploy right and left, to form a little beach-head until everybody had got across.

Turning away momentarily to look for any suspicious movement in the tall grass, Multhauff swung back to see Kenny Gruennert crawling past him in the brush, going out ahead, looking for Japs.

"How'd you get here so quick?" Multhauff whispered.

"Oh, when I passed the captain I pulled my helmet down over my face and looked the other way. I guess he didn't know me."

Or else, knowing him, the captain deliberately let him go on, in the realization that young twenty-year-old Gruennert was a good man to have along in any scrap.

With all the men safely across and deployed, the platoon advanced through the brush, shoving themselves along with heels and elbows. Everything was quiet. For perhaps one hundred and

fifty yards they advanced without any sign that Japs were on the premises. They slithered under trees, through grass, looking for Jap pillboxes.

Then, all at once, the quiet was shattered by the bark of guns and there were the muffled cries of hit men, and everybody lay flat and tried to decide where the fire was coming from.

"You can't see a thing in this brush," Sparky Multhauff muttered.

"Shots are coming from behind," Gruennert said. "We must of crawled past trees with snipers in 'em."

Pressed close to the stinking earth, sweaty in the hot jungle, the attackers rolled to their sides and fired impartially into all the treetops. Methodically they aimed at clumps of leaves, like October hunters shooting into squirrel nests, and were grimly satisfied to find that this seemed to reduce the fire coming from the flanks and the rear.

Then they tried to advance. With bullets clipping the grasstops, Gruennert managed to crawl within thirty yards of the Jap pillboxes, but so intense was the cross fire that there was no way to get closer. Sparky Multhauff tried the experiment of digging a trench toward the pillboxes. The others caught the idea, and they all went to work with entrenching tools, throwing up dirt, working hoarsely and intently, half lying on their sides. The heads of the trenches moved foot by foot toward the Japs.

A Jap grenade bounded into the grass above the nearest trench and exploded. Thereafter, wherever men plied their shovels, grenades fell, and the platoon had to give it up. It was a bloody game of blind man's buff, with all the odds on the side of the Japs. In their prepared positions, all the Japs had to do was press a trigger whenever the brush moved, or toss a grenade wherever a shovel threw dirt. Captain Wentland and four men of the platoon were killed before the platoon decided to crawl back to the beach-head and dig in for the night.

At ten o'clock that night, as they lay on the bank of the stream, the battalion decided that it was useless to go on without artillery help. Orders came through to withdraw from the Island entirely and return to bivouac. As they trailed into camp, ragged and dirty, Frank Shannon of the machine-gun section eagerly asked Kenny what it was like.

"A bit rugged," the mortar sergeant replied with a shrug. "But in a way it was like football. They've got a line and you've got one. And you try to get through."

He might have added other thoughts that were unquestionably in his mind: that it took teamwork to break through the line. Men had to work together, and stay by each other, the way you did on a football team. And if the defense was strong, you just had to hit a little harder. Looked at in that way, the attack on the Island wasn't a defeat. It was simply one down, stopped at the line of scrimmage. There would be more downs later.

Back in Jefferson High, Kenny had played left tackle on a team that had won the Rock Valley conference championship, and the school year book called him the team's mainstay, a veritable Samson in the line. The comparison to Samson was apt, because he packed 170 pounds of weight on his five feet eight inches of height. He was all smooth, rounded muscle, solidly laid on. Not a big man, exactly, but an agile chunk.

Few men in the 127th were more at home outdoors, or more able to find their way about alone, than Kenneth Gruennert. Helenville, Wisconsin, where he was born on November 19, 1922, is a village of 250 people, in a pleasant countryside of dairy farms, midway between Milwaukee and Madison. In a town of that size there isn't much *but* outdoors, and a fellow's fun is to be found in the woods, fields, and streams around the home.

Kenny caught his first fish when he was five. It happened to be a six-pound carp, but instead of calling for help, he planted his heels in the bank, yelling, "I got him!" and finally hauled up the fish. With a cut-down little .410-gauge shotgun he shot his first rabbit at the age of eight, and brought down his first pheasant on the wing the next year.

"Kenny was the one who brought back the fish," writes Mrs. A. F. Koser, next-door neighbor to the Gruennerts. "Even when he was very young, he didn't mind going hunting alone. I can still see him trudging across the hill to a tamarack woods some distance from his home."

Kenny's early years were filled with all the outdoor fun that rural America affords. He developed into a rugged, independent youngster who handled his own problems without outside help.

His father, Arthur J. Gruennert, operated a garage in Helenville until he was appointed register of deeds in the near-by larger town of Jefferson. Kenny liked to tinker in his dad's shop after school, and soon developed a knack with tools.

Week ends and summers, there was work on Grandfather Gruennert's and his uncle's farms. In between times there was the family garden to tend, behind the pleasant white-framed house in which the Gruennerts lived. In winters, there were skating parties with Mary Koser on near-by Heine's Pond.

Kenny joined the Four-H Club and his garden produce won many prizes at the Jefferson County Fair, with the result that one year he was selected as his club's representative at the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago.

It was in school sports that the husky youngster came into his own. From the age of fourteen he was the recognized catcher for the Helenville team. His stocky build and his squat behind the plate, with his hands resting on the ground and his elbows stuck out to the sides, earned him the nickname by which he was called ever after. It was "Toad." At Jefferson High, Toad won three letters in football and was captain of the team in its championship year.

Toad Gruennert's military service began in February, 1939, when he enlisted in the Wisconsin National Guard. Until June 4, 1940, Guard membership was a matter of summer camp and occasional drills, but on that fateful day Kenny's regiment was mustered into the Federal Service and shortly afterwards was on its way to Camp Beauregard, Louisiana.

Men in a national guard company come from the same locality. They have known each other, for the most part, since boyhood. There is no chance for a man to fool anybody. He's too well known. Any promotion he receives he has to earn. He has to merit the respect and liking of his fellow soldiers.

Kenny measured up, at camp. He was promoted to corporal, then to sergeant. He played on the regimental football and battalion baseball teams. There were times when he had the chance to promote a transfer to aviation or Officers' Candidate School, but he wrote his father that he "didn't feel like leaving the gang."

Guard regiments were that way. The fellows were lifelong companions and wanted to stick together.

Oddly, when these letters came, the father thought of an incident that had happened when the four-year-old Kenneth paid a visit to his aunt, Mrs. Harold Schatz, at West Bend, Wisconsin. She asked him whether he wanted to sleep with her or her husband. The child thought it over, then said:

"With Harold. Us men must stick together."

Arthur Gruennert feels that the child's statement was a true index of his character. It was the way he played football. It was the way he played the more serious game of war training. Kenny found deep satisfaction in sticking with the gang.

There were all-too-brief furloughs home. On one such leave, in May, 1941, he arrived at Helenville with nothing but the clothes he had on. No baggage, no change of wear, no toilet articles. The family wanted to know, what on earth!

"My train was to leave at noon, Saturday," Kenny explained. "I was all packed up, ready to go, when we had an alert. This meant that everything had to be packed in trunks and stored away, just as if we were moving out. The alert was called off Saturday noon, but there was no time to repack before the train left. So I came without the stuff."

"The captain might have let you know."

"Heck, no!" Toad protested. "What kind of military discipline would that be?"

The last furlough was the best. It came in late fall, just before Pearl Harbor. Ken and his Dad and his brother Lyle, five years younger, went hunting for pheasants and ducks, and there were game dinners in the family dining room. There was a fast 800-mile trip to visit relatives in Fort Wayne, Indiana. For two weeks, Ken did all the things he loved best to do, and when he said good-by on November third, he surprised his folks by crying just a little.

"It was as if," his father soberly says, "he had a premonition that it was good-by forever."

When Ken sailed for Australia on April 21, 1942, letters became more irregular but they told a high-spirited story of baseball games between the Aussies and Americans, sightseeing in some unnamed

city, and finally a letter from "somewhere in New Guinea, the day after Thanksgiving." In this letter Ken hinted of a boat ride during which Tojo tried to bomb their ship.

"In a few days," he wrote, "we'll be going Jap hunting. No bag limit, no size limit, no time limit and Uncle Sam furnishing us free ammunition. I think I am going to like this hunt."

It was the letter of an independent outdoor youngster who had been training for more than two years and now was eager to test himself in battle.

The anxious parents in Helenville had followed the news stories and understood the situation perhaps better than Ken. They knew how the Japanese had come across the New Guinea peninsula, over the Owen Stanley Mountains, almost to Port Moresby. How the Australians had met them and pushed them back. The Gruenerts had read how our Marines had landed on a certain Solomon Island named Guadalcanal and were still fighting to hold it. They sensed a gathering offensive in New Guinea as a counterpart of the Guadalcanal campaign. Putting two and two together, they realized that now, at long last, the United States was ready to carry the fight to the enemy. To the Thirty-second Division was to go the honor of undertaking the New Guinea phase of our Far Eastern offensive.

They couldn't know, then, that the 127th Infantry was flown across the Owen Stanley Mountains, and that Kenny's company landed just ten or twelve miles from the Japs at a runway hewn out of the jungle, called the Dobodura Strip. They didn't know that the boys from Jefferson and Helenville hacked their way from the Dobodura Strip through swampy jungle to within a few hundred yards of the town of Buna.

The names of Buna, Buna Mission, the Government Plantation, the airstrip, the Island, the Triangle, and Entrance Creek are now part of the history of the Thirty-second Division. Then they were just new places on a battle map. The airstrip, captured by the Japs from the Australians months before, was a landing field 90 yards wide by 1300 yards long.

It was in this region that the Japanese were making their final stand. Buna was a cluster of native huts with pandanus-thatched

roofs. The Mission was a tawdry mixture of European-style houses and Papuan huts. The Government Plantation was an extensive coconut grove on the dry ground along the seashore. The airstrip, a little to the south, was a single runway in a kunai grass prairie.

What the men of Company L learned, when they moved through the jungle into the battle area, was that the ground they stood on was only a few feet higher than the sea. Thrust your spade into the jungle floor and you struck water. Step off the high-ground trails and you might sink to your waist or your shoulders in mud. It was a dank, steamy, dead jungle, made worse by the daily downpour of rain and the buzzing onslaughts of gnats and malarial mosquitoes.

The objective of the Thirty-second was the ocean. But to reach the shore from their jungle bivouacs, the men had to take one of three or four solid trails across the morass of mud and water that barred the way. Naturally the Japs had these approaches guarded with pillboxes connected by trenches. The pillboxes were clustered in groups of three or four, so placed that to approach one, you had to cross the lane of fire of another. On top of that, each defense point was protected by snipers in trees.

It wasn't long before fatigue suits became torn by the thorny lawyer vines, and the soles of shoes were sucked off by the ever-present mud. It wasn't long before most men discarded their underwear to cool off, but kept their fatigue suits on to protect themselves from mosquitoes and gnats. Whether they knew it or not, most of the men ran a fever, day and night.

It was in this dismal setting of exhausting heat and mud and impossible terrain that Kenny Gruennert went around, volunteering for every possible assignment, unwilling to be left out of any raid, whether his mortar platoon was involved or not.

On December fourteenth, K and I companies spearheaded the assault that took the settlement of Buna, while Ken's L Company stayed back in support.

Objective Number Two was the Mission, down the coast a little to the southeast, and for this job L Company was to take the lead. Their assignment was to drive through the Plantation to the

coast between the Mission and a jut of land called Giropa Point. Then, with the Japs bottled in from both sides, they would close in on the Mission and clean it out.

Now, after the raid on the Island, the company spent four days in patrol duty, sniper hunting, and tense waiting. It was decided that for the coming assignment, mortars would be of little use against solidly built pillboxes covered with logs, earth, and even metal sheets. There was only one way to clear out a pillbox and that was to belly-crawl up to it and throw in a grenade.

So the weapons platoon was turned into a fourth infantry platoon with Lieutenant Matz in command and Ken Gruennert second. Inwardly, Ken must have been pleased, because this meant that he wouldn't be sitting back somewhere, in relative safety, attempting to toss torpedo-shaped shells where the infantry wanted them. He would be with the bunch.

They lined up for the attack with the second platoon in the center, the first platoon on the right flank, and Kenny's provisional platoon on the left. The other platoon, the third, was to be in support. Lieutenant Fahres and Sergeant Frank Shannon, with their machine guns, were to come along with the support platoon.

The attack wouldn't be without artillery preparation. The mortars, though they were to be left behind, were each to pitch twenty shells into the Jap positions. A battery of Australian 25-pounders were then to start firing, lifting their range one hundred yards every ten minutes. As the platoons advanced behind the creeping barrage, Shannon's machine guns were to fire over their heads to discourage Japanese counterattacks.

Two days before Christmas, at three in the afternoon, with two days' rations and all the ammunition and grenades they could carry, the men of L moved up to relieve K Company of Milwaukee, which had dug in before Buna Mission and was now holding the line.

They had to cross the river—the same river they had crossed to raid the Island, but at a point nearer the Mission. There was only one boat, capable of holding three or four men.

It was hardly like Washington crossing the Delaware. In place of the Delaware's clear water this river was a stinking black channel. In place of winter there was stifling heat. Instead of the Penn-

sylvania shore, there were banks overgrown with shoulder-high kunai grass. Ropes were tied to each end of the Buna boat, and L Company was pulled across, three or four at a time.

Kenny's platoon, first across, got into position in the deep brush at six o'clock. The last platoon across didn't get up to the line until ten.

That night Kenny lay in a hole with his friend, Bill Gleason. Not far away was Lieutenant Matz. Both Bill and Matz were to be wounded, tomorrow, and were to lie in the jungle for ten days before a final attack was to clear the area of Japs and make rescue possible. Twelve of the platoon were to fight their way back to safety. Four more were to make a wide detour through the jungle and not get back for four days. Disaster was to strike the fourth platoon, but not before Kenny had shown them how a battle can be won.

Kenny himself, daring and eager as he was, had his moments of self-searching that night, as he and Bill waited for the dawn. It was impossible not to entertain the thought of being hit by the small .25-caliber Japanese bullets.

"I'm not afraid of those little bullets," Ken said to Bill. "They can hit you a lot of places and not hurt you too much."

He was building a strength in himself, and in Bill, too, as they waited for attack.

It came, finally, in the misty morning. First the crash of mortar shells, landing in the six-hundred-yard stretch of jungle and plantation between L Company and the white sand beach that was their objective. Then the whistling crescendo and bang of Aussie 25-pounders. And after that, as gaunt, dirty men began crawling through the brush, the birdlike *cheep* of machine-gun bullets passing overhead like a protecting curtain.

Over on the right, Sparky Multhau's first platoon advanced one hundred yards and came to a river of mud into which men sank to their waists. The higher ground beyond was swept by fire from two Japanese pillboxes, and the few men who reached it were cut down. There was no brush in the Jap grove. It was clear ground, giving the Japs a perfect view of all that moved in front of them.

On the left, Ken's platoon had better luck. There the brush protected their advance until they were less than two hundred

yards from the beach. By lifting his head, Ken could see the waters of the South Pacific.

The sight of blue water was like a heady tonic, spurring Ken's desire to get the job done. Crawling this far, the platoon had stretched its line dangerously thin, so a runner was sent back asking for reinforcements and informing the battalion that they were going to try to break through.

But as the men of the platoon, led by Matz and Ken, wormed their way up on the high ground of the plantation, they could see more than the ocean. They could plainly see the three Jap pillboxes, alive with spurts of flame, that barred their way.

Ken personally undertook to reduce the pillboxes. He may have recalled his football analogy: if the opposing line is tough, you have to hit it a little harder.

He told the men nearest him: "I'm going after that pillbox. You keep shooting at the slits in front and give me all the protection you can."

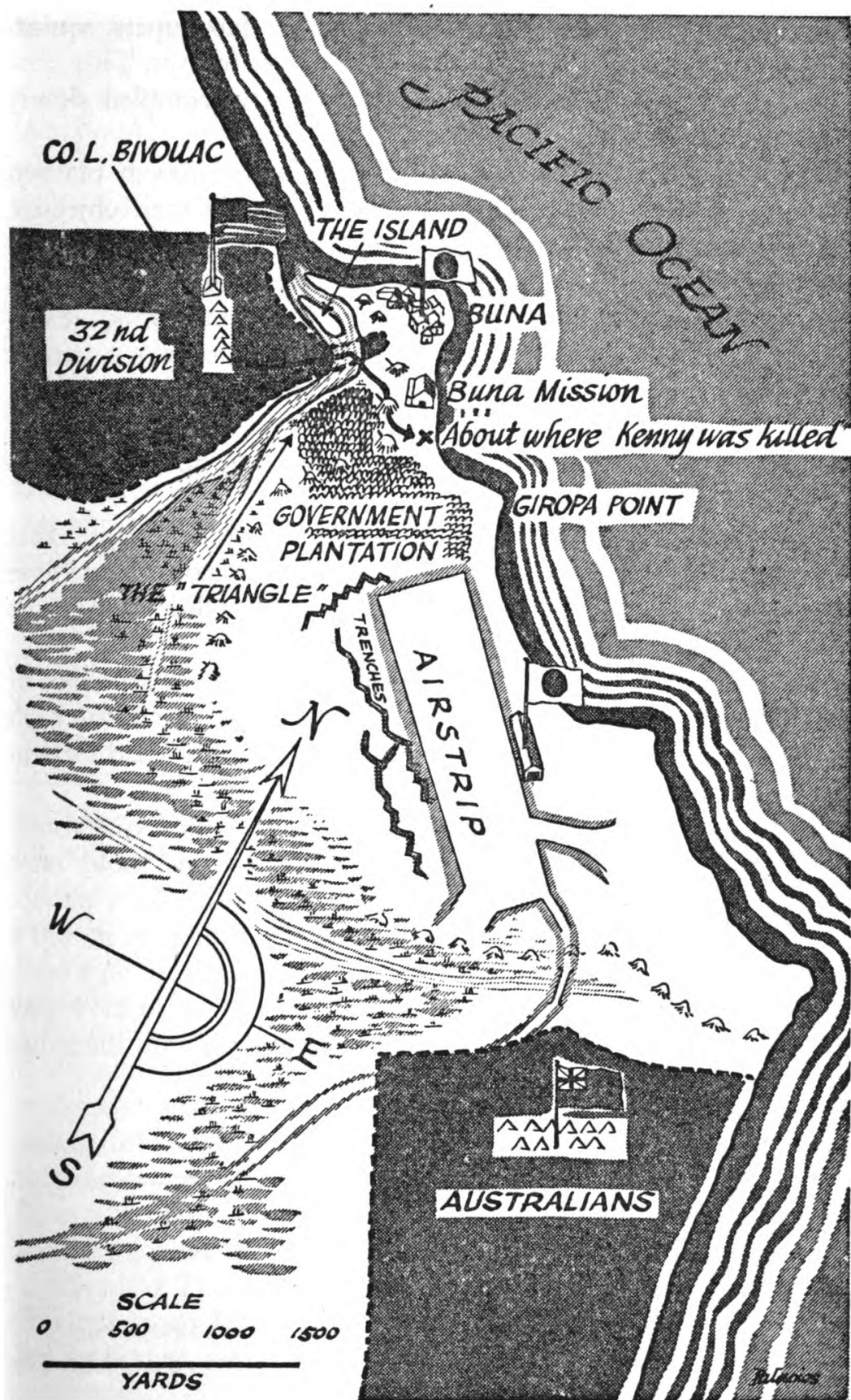
Then he was sidling up on the nearest bunker, dragging his gun with one hand, clutching a grenade with the other. Snipers in trees leveled on him as he made his way across the unsheltered open space, and bullets dug into the dirt alongside his husky body, but he somehow got within throwing distance and hurled the small pineapple-shaped grenade at the opening in the front of the pillbox. With the explosion he was scrambling up to the slit, poking in his gun, and raking the interior.

There were three Japanese in the pillbox, and none survived Ken's one-man attack.

Aaron Mathews reached him a moment later and saw that Kenny was holding his shoulder, where blood was reddening his torn fatigue suit.

"You go back," Aaron told him. "You're through for the day." But the light of battle was in Ken's eyes and there was no thought of retreat in his mind. Before Aaron could stop him, he was wriggling toward the second pillbox and presently the platoon heard the explosions of three grenades thrown in quick succession. Out of the smoke that enveloped the pillbox Jap forms were running. At short range, they were easy marks for the guns of the platoon.

Two-thirds of the job was done, and Ken set about the job



of going after the final emplacement. But the Jap snipers, squinting over their sights, couldn't miss their target forever. This time they found their mark, and Ken's husky body crumpled slowly and reluctantly to the jungle floor.

Inspired by Ken's leadership, the men of the fourth platoon charged through to the beach—the first to attain their objective in the Buna Mission battle. It was nobody's fault that other units couldn't advance and complete the job of taking Buna Mission. Rather it was the fault of the impossible New Guinea mud. It was Kenny's example that gave the rest of the outfit—lifelong friends and neighbors most of them—the heart to go on and finish the job.

On Christmas Eve, 1942, Kenny died. On February 3, 1943, a yellow envelope was delivered to the white frame house in Helenville, containing the message:

"The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your son Kenneth E. Gruennert was killed in action in defense of his country in Southwest Pacific area. Letter follows. Ulio. The Adjutant General."

In time, there was a little consolation to ease the sharp edge of grief. There was the Medal of Honor, eternal evidence of the high regard in which the men of the Thirty-second held Toad Gruennert.

Then there is the knee-hole desk in the Helenville living room, made by Ken's capable hands. And there's the end table, once alongside an armchair, but now over by the wall. Like a private little shrine, it has the high school year book resting on it, and a large scrap book presented by the students of Ken's grade school.

These things remain to keep fresh the memory of a husky, happy athletic youngster who liked above all else to stick with the gang.

Sergeant Elmer J. Burr

CRISIS IN A SHELL HOLE



At Buna Mission, New Guinea, December 24, 1942

MOST stories behind the Medal of Honor have to do with encounters with the enemy, and objectives gained in the face of odds.

But not all stories are like that. Now and then, there arises a tale of utter self-sacrifice . . . of complete and instant devotion to the lives and well-being of near-by comrades. It was that way with Elmer J. Burr, first sergeant of I Company, 127th Infantry, and citizen of Menasha, Wisconsin.

Like many other older men, war was not the uppermost thought in thirty-four-year-old Burr's mind. Rather, it was a necessary interruption to the business of living.

Even in war, Burr's thoughts were of his job back in Menasha, hauling freight for the Lillicrap Transfer Company, and of the friends who were still with the company. His mind was back with his wife, Lucille Anderson Burr, and their two children. When he wrote his wife, it was seldom to tell her about Army training or the prospect of battle, but to chat about the youngsters, the need for buying war bonds, and gossip about the folks they knew. His letters were like their conversations in the living room at home.

Born May 11, 1908, in Neenah, Wisconsin, Elmer Burr went as far as the tenth grade in school before he became impatient with books and went looking for a job. Neenah and Menasha, neighboring towns on the northern shore of Lake Winnebago, were thriving centers of tourist trade and industry, and the young Burr soon was making good money driving a Yellow cab and later working for the transfer company.

When the Thirty-second Division was mustered into the Federal Service in 1940, Elmer had already served with the National Guard for more than ten years, drilling once a week in the armory, and

going each summer to Camp Douglas. He went with I Company to Louisiana, spent a year in camp, and on October 16, 1941, was discharged from the Army because he was over the age limit of twenty-eight. He came home to his family, put away his uniform, and got a job with the Mack Paper Tube and Core Company at Appleton, running splitter machines and core machines.

Less than two months after his return to civilian life came the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In March, 1942, he was recalled to active service and rejoined his old outfit at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. This time he knew it was for keeps. The division was on the move, never again to settle down for long until it had met and engaged the enemy.

Yet, even when the outfit was training in Australia, Elmer was thinking about getting the war over with, so that he could return to his family.

"From the looks of things out here," he wrote his wife, "this job won't take too long."

He looked at Australia with the eyes of a pioneer seeking an opportunity on a new frontier. "This land is a lot like the U.S.A.," he wrote. "If we had some money we could start a place here. We'd only have to work ten years, and then we could sit on the sidelines and look on."

At Christmas time, 1942, Mrs. Burr received a present from her husband. It was a check for \$65 with instructions to buy something for the youngsters, Elmer Junior and Betty Ann. Although she wasn't aware of it, even while she was shopping for the youngsters, her husband was engaged at close quarters with the enemy.

The trail to battle was an unusual one for Burr and the men of the Thirty-second Division. They were ferried by ship to Port Moresby on the island of New Guinea, and from there most of them were flown across the mountains to the battle area.

Burr knew, as he waited his turn to board a plane at Moresby, that the 126th Regiment had preceded his outfit across the mountains and was now somewhere on the northern coast, in contact with the Japanese. Company I's turn came on December fifth. The company was split up into small groups and loaded into transport planes, and soon the heavily laden ships were bumping across the field and climbing into the air.

It was only a thirty-five minute trip from Moresby to the Dobodura landing strip a few miles south of the battle area, but the ride was a thriller. To avoid detection by Jap fighter planes, the transports skimmed the treetops and hugged the ravines and canyons, twisting and turning to merge themselves with the jungle green. Burr could glance from the plane and see trees and cliffs whizzing past, almost close enough to touch.

The Dobodura strip was nothing but a long patch of grass in the jungle. As the units of I and K companies landed, they were assembled at the edge of the field and marched along a jungle trail to an unnamed village of thatched huts, there to wait for the rest of the outfit. By nightfall, the company was fully assembled and marched to the village of Ango to wait for battle.

On December ninth, Captain Michael F. Ustruck turned to Sergeant Burr and told him:

"All officers and noncoms of the company are to assemble with packs."

"Where are we going, sir?" Burr asked.

"Up to Buna Village to take over the lines from the Second Battalion of the 126th. Officers and NCO's will go first, to familiarize themselves with the area. The Japs are in the village. The Second Battalion is over to the left of it."

The small detachment of men shouldered their packs and started up the trail. Coming fresh from camp, well fed and well clothed, these men were shocked at their first glimpse of the soldiers they were to relieve outside of Buna Village. The Second Battalion of the 126th had been reduced by fever and casualties to an effective strength of 150 men. They looked like tattered beachcombers in some far-fetched South Sea movie. Their clothes were in rags, their faces unshaven, their eyes sunken and staring. They talked in whispers, clearing their throats and pausing between words, because they no longer had the energy to finish a sentence in one breath.

Sergeant Burr and Captain Ustruck looked at them and at each other with an unspoken question in their eyes. Both men prayed that I Company wouldn't have to suffer what these men had gone through.

On December tenth, I and K companies, fresh and eager, took

their places on the left sector, facing the seacoast town of Buna Village, while a thin, stumbling line of 126th Infantry men went back for a long rest. For a few days the two companies played around, sending out patrols, locating the enemy and feeling them out.

Then, on December fourteenth, after a powerful mortar barrage, two assault platoons, one each from I and K, moved into the village and took it. While these two platoons were advancing, the rest of the men in the two companies lay on the ground and fired at every treetop in the battle area. With their bullets, they actually cut down the tops of many trees, to make sure that snipers would not harass the attacking platoons.

The total casualties of this first action were only six men wounded, and Burr and his commanding officer began to think that maybe it wouldn't be so bad, capturing Buna Mission seven hundred yards farther down the coast.

After the village was cleaned up, companies L and M relieved them, and I and K moved to a cluster of huts on the south shore of Entrance Creek, a half mile inland from Buna Mission. Here, Burr soon gave up any thought that the rest of the Buna action would be easy. The Japs had anti-aircraft guns that could be leveled to fire at troops. Day and night they peppered the bivouac area of I and K with shells, and the casualty list began to grow without the men ever seeing a Jap.

At night the enemy filtered into the area and climbed trees. Burr and his fellow soldiers, lying in foxholes half filled with water, munching on cold C rations and vitamin pills, would suddenly find themselves fired upon. At almost any hour of the day, knee-mortar shells would rise out of the tall grass of the Government Gardens across Entrance Creek and land among the Americans.

The strength of K and I companies gradually dwindled, until they contained less than a hundred fighting men. One day Burr looked at the soldier nearest him and saw that the man's eyes were hollow and fever-glazed, that his face was bearded and his denim suit torn. In short, the soldier looked exactly like those stumbling scarecrows K Company had relieved only two short weeks before. The thought struck Burr that he, too, must look the same way.

The battle for Buna Mission began to take shape. On December

nineteenth, part of Burr's company crossed Entrance Creek and established a "beachhead," in the Government Gardens on the opposite shore. The Gardens were nothing but a field of tall grass, and there was nothing to do but lie there and keep the Japs out of the beachhead. Then, when the attack on Buna Mission began, there would be a safe place for the rest of the company to cross the deep, treacherous channel.

Early in the morning of Christmas Eve, 1942, the attack began. Burr's company was on the right of the line, with orders to attack northeast and drive through to the beach just east of the Mission. To the left was L Company.

This attack was no spectacle of charging, yelling men. Burr and his fellows made their assault on hands and knees, dragging their guns through the mud and the grass. An Australian artillery barrage led them, and they tried to follow it as closely as they could, but after only thirty yards of advance I Company was stopped dead by fire that seemed to come from all sides.

There was no front line. Creeping soldiers found Jap pillboxes in front and to the sides. Government Gardens was alive with Japs. They threw mortar shells, grenades, and automatic rifle bullets at every moving American, and before long the casualties were more than our first-aid men could handle.

About eight o'clock in the morning, Burr looked up from the company command post near the bank of Entrance Creek to see Captain Ustruck and Private First Class Talbert White crawling toward him, dragging between them Lieutenant Francis Young. Lieutenant Young was wounded seven times in the chest by machine-gun bullets and lacerated by grenade fragments. Burr helped them drag in the wounded officer and speedily found a medical man to get Young back across the creek to a hospital.

While Ustruck was at the command post, he called battalion headquarters to tell them that the battle was going badly and he needed help. He was sent a platoon from K Company. With this added help, he proceeded to reorganize his men and to crawl forward once more to play tag with pillboxes.

Shortly after Ustruck left, Burr went forward with Lieutenant Grimes. They crawled ahead until the sudden snap of bullets, clipping the grass close to their heads, told them they were under fire

from close ahead. As they rolled hastily into a shell hole, Burr caught a glimpse of the log face of a pillbox not twenty yards in front of them. They lay there panting, wondering how to get at it, when a soldier dropped in on top of them. It was Captain Ustruck. Bullets cracked overhead as he sprawled beside them in the wet hole.

"We got one pillbox," Ustruck breathed. "Sergeant Vondracek threw in a couple of grenades. But this one—"

"It's ahead and a little to the left," Burr volunteered.

"He's got an automatic rifle," Ustruck said. "I can tell by the sound."

The three men lay there, muttering, debating. Now and then a short automatic rifle burst thudded into the ground above their heads. The Jap couldn't get them with his rifle, but on the other hand he was uncomfortably close . . .

At that moment a grenade landed squarely in the two feet of space between the prone bodies of Burr and Captain Ustruck. Both men saw it.

For a moment Ustruck thought of throwing his helmet over it. Then, instinctively, he made a sidewise leap, landing squarely on top of Lieutenant Grimes.

Sergeant Burr, up on his elbows, his eyes on the smooth round object, had just enough time to know that if the grenade were allowed to explode it might well kill them all. Acting with sublime self-sacrifice, he threw himself over it.

The grenade exploded, shattering his midsection. His body absorbed most of the blow, but fragments escaped their human shield and tore into Ustruck's legs and hips. Both men lay on the ground, rolling and groaning.

Grimes was unhurt—he had been sheltered by Ustruck. Leaping out of the shell hole into the tall grass behind it, he lay flat and unfastened the sling of his rifle. He threw the end of the sling over the edge of the hole.

"I'll drag you both out," he called in a low voice. "Take hold."

Ustruck grabbed the end with both hands and was hauled into the grass. Grimes tossed the sling to Burr, but Burr was unable to take hold of it.

"I'll go get a litter," Grimes muttered. "Wait here."

He crawled away.

Ustruck, lying in the grass, feeling no sensation whatever below his hips, thought his legs were blown off. He raised up on his hands to take a look and a sniper's bullet tore into his left arm. He dropped to his face and began to pull himself rearward by his hands, with no help from his legs. As he inched rearward, more sniper's bullets followed him.

A few yards back, Ustruck fell into a hole upon two I Company machine gunners and these two men started him toward the aid station. Halfway back, they came upon Private White and Ustruck asked him to crawl up to the shell hole to take out Burr. Somehow he got Burr back, lying prone, pulling him through the grass by the shoulders. The sergeant was taken back to the portable hospital, still alive. In spite of all the doctors could do he died the next day—Christmas day, 1942.

Back in Menasha, Burr's wife and two children in time came to know that they must somehow find a new way of living. There was some measure of comfort in the warm letters of tribute from officers and fellow-soldiers. There was, for example, the letter of Lieutenant Francis Young written from the Percy Jones Hospital in Battle Creek:

"Sergeant Burr sacrificed his life to save his comrades. I believe it was a habit of his to save lives, disregarding his own."

Sergeant Fournier and Corporal Hall

TWO VETERANS AND A MACHINE GUN



At Guadalcanal, January 10, 1943

TWO of the soldiers who landed with the Thirty-fifth Infantry on Guadalcanal Island, December 17, 1942, were Sergeant William G. Fournier and Mess Orderly Lewis Hall.

Like the rest of the men of the regiment, Hall and Fournier knew something of the recent history of this strip of jungle and mountain in the South Seas. Here the Marines had landed on August seventh, more than four months ago. They had captured the Japanese airstrip and christened it Henderson Field. They had cleared some of the hills and swamps surrounding the field and secured for themselves a considerable part of the northern shoreline.

This much they had held against countless Japanese counter-attacks, while our Navy was clearing the seas and making it possible for supplies and reinforcements to come in. Dirty and tired, lacking in food and ordnance, with insufficient air support, the Marines had clung grimly to the field and its approaches. Just a month before, our Navy had met a strong Japanese task force coming down to retake Guadalcanal, and had sunk no less than thirty Japanese warships and transports.

Now the ocean was ours, and the Army was coming in to relieve the tired Marines and take over the job of driving the Japs from the island.

Army service was nothing new to Lewis Hall. Born in Oak Hill, Ohio, on March 2, 1895, he was well past his forty-seventh birthday when he jumped off the landing barge into the shallow water near Koli Point, Guadalcanal. There were nine enlistments on his service record. He could sit by the field stove and spin yarns by the hour, when he wanted to, of service in China, the Philippines, Hawaii, and France. Lewis Hall was a world traveler and he had

done all his traveling in the olive drab uniform of the United States Army. The boys called him "Pop" and looked up to him. He was mess orderly of M Company, Thirty-fifth Infantry.

Sergeant Fournier commanded a machine-gun section in the second platoon of M Company. Back in 1931 he had begun a three-year hitch in the Navy. After leaving the service, he had found work during the depression years in a radio store at Wakefield, Rhode Island, the home town of his foster father, Henry Gadrow. By 1940 he was back in the service, this time in the Regular Army.

Bill Fournier had never known parents of his own. Two years after his birth, on June 21, 1913, at Norwich, Connecticut, his mother had died, leaving him an orphan. Her brother, Henry Gadrow, adopted the baby and brought him up.

His foster parents were good to him, but it wasn't like having his own parents and his own home. Family ties had no strong pull for him, and he seldom wrote home. One senses that the twenty-nine-year-old soldier, leading his platoon into jungle huts at Henderson Field, had found satisfaction and a reason for existence in the Army. Life had meaning and purpose, and one could forget loneliness.

While they were getting settled in their quarters in and around Henderson Field, the men of the Thirty-fifth had time to learn something about the task that lay ahead. The Japs had to be driven from the hills to the south of the field, and a part of the shoreline had to be cleared. Although our Navy now had command of the sea, the enemy was still being supplied from a section of beach to the northwest. The Japs knew the tides, and they had a way of releasing rafts at night from supply ships, letting the tidal currents carry the rafts to shore. This source of supplies had to be cut off.

From the departing Marines, Hall and Fournier learned the nature of the enemy they were to meet.

"They do their fighting at night," the Marines said. "When the dark comes, they filter through the forests and set up machine guns and put snipers in trees. Sometimes they drop in on your foxhole with their knives out."

"They're patient. They'll set up a gun behind your lines and sit there for hours—for days—without ever firing a shot. They let you get close before they cut loose."

"They never give up. They fight until they're killed."

"Sometimes they'll make a suicidal charge, never stopping while a man is left."

Other regiments of the Twenty-fifth Division arrived and the business of taking over the front lines from the Marines went on. Men learned how easy it was to get lost in the jungle; they learned the cost in sweat of traversing a mile of ground. They learned what it meant to live under the daily downpour of the rainy season.

Yet life on the island had its rewards. Now and then bananas and papayas were to be had, to vary the Army diet. A small stick of dynamite, tossed into bay or river mouth, invariably yielded a meal of tropical fish. Some of the soldiers went on pigeon hunts, or brought a native pig to camp for butchering. There were daily swims for the men stationed near the shore.

Major General J. Lawton Collins, commanding the Twenty-fifth Division, had a plan for cleaning out the Japs. Continuous assault lines were next to impossible in a land that was a jumble of steep hills and dense jungle. The men would operate in combat teams, each team on its own, each part of the larger plan. They would take the heights surrounding a patch of jungle, then go down the sides and clean out the patch.

While doing this, the general pattern of movement would be north, in order to drive the Japanese toward the northern tip of the island. Meanwhile, detachments would be landed at Cape Esperance, on the northernmost tip, to work down the coast, thus bottling the Japs in the interior and cutting them off from their supplies. In time the survivors would be surrounded in a small inland pocket, and that would be the end.

Hall and Fournier's Company M. was part of the inland operations, assigned to the task of clearing the hills southwest of Henderson Field. When Hall understood what was going on, and knew that the company would soon be hitting the Japs, he went to his company commander, Captain Thurmond L. Walters.

"Sir," he said, "I'd like to be relieved of mess duties and be given a machine-gun squad."

The captain must have wondered if the forty-seven-year-old veteran could stand up under the rigor of forced marches and

short rations and tense sleepless nights, but in the end he assented to the change.

Thus it was that on January sixth, when M Company left a sanguine spot called Bloody Knoll for an unknown destination, Pop Hall was a corporal in charge of a machine-gun squad in Sergeant Fournier's section.

What follows is based on the eye-witness story of Sergeant J. P. Morgan and fellow soldiers in M Company, who saw at firsthand the action that won Hall and Fournier the Medal of Honor.

On leaving Bloody Knoll, the company had orders to proceed forward until they met Japanese opposition. They marched four days and nights at a pace so fast that supplies couldn't keep up and at times the men had to go without food or water. Now and then an exhausted soldier, weakened from malaria or dysentery, staggered to the side of the trail and dropped into the wet underbrush, unable to keep up.

The heat was terrific and there was a constant, leaden rain that saturated denim coveralls and C rations and ammunition belts, seeping into the mechanism of Garand rifles and machine guns, running into shoe tops and soaking blistered feet. Cigarette packages became soggy messes and the pages of personal diaries stuck together and mildewed.

The march wasn't a mere matter of walking. Rather it was feeling the way, step by step, through matted jungle, stumbling over roots, falling into pits in the jungle floor and climbing out. It was pulling one's self up steep mountainsides, with a steadying hand on protruding rocks and tree trunks. It was sliding down the opposite slope, scratching wrists and faces on rocks and the branches of trees.

In this kind of marching, the smallest burden grew heavy. The ammunition belt around the waist, with two canteens hanging from it, chafed the hips. The small combat pack with entrenching tool, rations, personal effects, and perhaps a couple of grenades, cut into the shoulders. Heads sagged from the weight of the helmet and rifles slung over shoulders grew as heavy as cannon. After a while, men carried their burdens with a kind of numbness and learned that they could sleep with half-opened eyes as they stumbled along.

The men in Fournier's section had extra burdens to carry. There was the light air-cooled .30-caliber machine gun, divided into gun and tripod, weighing around fifty pounds in all. There were belts of machine-gun ammunition, slung over shoulders, and wooden boxes of ammunition carried by hand. This added weight was divided between gunner, assistant gunner, and three carriers.

When the men fell out and sank into the spongy ground to rest, there were the bugs and mosquitoes to think about. At night, when they were not marching, there were the unfamiliar night sounds of the jungle to puzzle over. Strange caws and shrieks, almost human in tone, made the GI's, huddled in their foxholes, shiver under the spell of an unfathomable mystery.

Now and then a scaly *something* slithered over the form of a resting soldier. Later he learned that it was the five-foot lizard of the tropics.

"They tell me those babies climb the trees and eat birds at night," one soldier remarked. "Maybe that's why we hear some of those ungodly screams."

Now and then the company was bivouacked in an area infested by the small, six-inch lizard. These were so abundant they reminded soldiers of swarms of oversize ants.

The trail led up and over one of the highest mountains in that part of Guadalcanal. On January ninth, M Company marched all night and continued forward the next day until early afternoon, with only short rest periods to relieve their aching muscles.

At 1 P.M., January tenth, the forward echelon, consisting of K Company and the section of M Company containing Hall and Fournier, descended a hill to the banks of a small river that ran through a sharp gulch. From both banks of the river high hills rose.

Here the officers of the forward echelon conferred. There was a quiet tenseness in the air that told the men that this was contact, and very soon there would be action.

K Company was to proceed to the top of the hill on the left of the gulch. It was to be an attack. Men looked to their rifles and patted the bulges where grenades were hidden.

But before the company dared climb the hill, something had to be done about the gulch. The river was an avenue leading to Jap-

held territory. All the Japs had to do, to cut off K Company and attack it from rear as well as front, was to come down this gulch.

Therefore Fournier's machine-gun section and another section from K were ordered to set up their guns and form a river block. This they did, protecting their guns behind shrubs and giving themselves as good a field of fire as possible in that rugged terrain.

K Company started up the hill, going in thin files, with plenty of space between men, while Hall and Fournier waited near their two guns. After fifteen minutes, the rest of M Company passed the river block and disappeared into the brush and trees of the hillside.

Hall lay on his elbows, listening to the scattered firing coming from the top of the hill, his eyes searching the gulch for signs of Japs. The firing up above grew in intensity and he knew that the battle was joined. Near him crouched Fournier.

Hall could see his machine gun, just a few yards away, with Private First Class Johnstone, the gunner, and Private Tanner, assistant gunner, waiting by it. Some distance from this gun was the other gun of the section, its muzzle commanding another sector of the gulch.

Perhaps Hall was remembering what the Marines had said back at Henderson: "Sometimes the Japs will make a suicidal charge, coming at you yelling, never stopping while a man is left."

Then somebody shouted: "There they are!" and Hall's eyes swung to where an arm was pointing.

The attack wasn't coming up the gulch. It was coming down the hill on the right and to the rear of the river block. Over the grass-covered, treeless knob of the hill more than fifty Japs were sliding down the slopes.

Things happened very fast. From the top of the hill the Japs had the men of the river block dead in their sights. Jap guns opened up. Under the fire, Johnstone and Tanner worked frantically at their gun, yelling something unintelligible above the rising sound of fire. Anxiously, sergeant and corporal waited for Johnstone's gun to commence firing. Tense, lifelong seconds passed.

Finally Fournier turned to Hall and said bleakly: "Their gun's jammed."

In the next moment, both Johnstone and Tanner crumpled beside their silent gun, dead from a storm of bullets. Other Jap bullets

were snapping through the branches and thudding into the ground between Hall and Fournier and the silent machine gun.

Fournier took a look at the other gun of his section and saw at once that it wasn't placed to fire on the Japs. Neither were the guns of the K Company section. Only the gun with the two dead men could command the hilltop. Only it had a ghost of a chance to stop the Japs. And it was jammed, its crew dead.

The staff sergeant in command of the road block sensed the futility of the situation. They had been tricked. The fates had decided against them. There was nothing left but retreat. "You guys!" he yelled. "Pull back! Hustle it up!"

The old-timer and the younger man looked at each other. They glanced back at the staff sergeant. Even while they looked, the staff sergeant slumped down, killed by a Jap bullet. Then, without a word, Hall and Fournier were scuttling forward toward the silent gun, sublimely ignoring the bullets that snapped around them. Presently they had moved Johnstone and Tanner away and were at work.

Fournier had a talent for things mechanical. Much of his life he had tinkered with radios and engines. Now, with invisible death about him, evidencing itself with sharp little cracks as the air closed behind speeding .25-caliber bullets, he worked skillfully at the jammed gun, until he was able to murmur:

"It's okay."

Placed as it was, the gun couldn't be elevated to fire on the top of the hill where moving Japs were in plain view, firing, slithering forward, and stopping to fire again. Somehow, the muzzle had to be raised.

Fournier leaped around to the front of the gun and lifted the tripod so that the muzzle slanted skyward. Muttered directions came from Pop Hall behind the gun: "Up a little. To the right. Hold it!"

The machine gun broke into life, and up on the hillside Japanese soldiers screamed and tumbled down the slope in the grotesque postures of death.

Meanwhile another soldier of Hall's squad, Private Moy, was doing a heroic job with his M-1 rifle. With a soldier from K Company to load M-1 clips from a belt of machine-gun ammunition,



Moy was in the midst of firing a string of four hundred rounds, without letup, firing until his hands received severe burns from holding to a red-hot barrel.

In the midst of the sweaty crisis, Lieutenant Fowler of K Company, hearing the rising fusillade in the valley, came running down the hill to find out what was going on in the rear of the hilltop battle. Corporal Hall saw him coming into the open, straight into range of the Japs. He yelled:

"For God's sake, go back! This is an ambush!"

The officer came up short, and stared, saved from almost certain death by a few paces.

While he watched and prayed, Hall and Fournier, out in the open, fired their gun. Perhaps they knew that they couldn't hope to escape destruction. Perhaps they were too busy to think about anything but the job in hand.

Whatever their thoughts, death was quick and merciful. A little storm of bullets found them. Fournier collapsed under the tripod and the machine gun fell off his shoulder. Hall rose to help him and as quickly slumped to the ground, a bullet through his head.

The sudden silence of their gun was followed by silence from the hillside. The fight was over and the threat to the rear of K and M eliminated. The few surviving Japs melted back over the hill into the jungle. Later, when there was time, Sergeant Morgan and his fellow-soldiers counted forty-eight dead Japanese, lying on the hillside in the field of fire of Hall's and Fournier's machine gun. These two men, an ex-sailor and a veteran of nine enlistments, ignoring an order to withdraw, had chosen to stay by their gun and die. By their act they prevented a force of Japanese from getting behind K and M and isolating them.

The two men were buried at the scene of battle and their regiment went on to capture the heights. Four days later, with the area securely in American possession, the bodies of M Company's dead were removed to Guadalcanal's military cemetery.

Corporal Hall's parents were dead, but there was a sister, Edith Hall Price, living in Columbus, Ohio, to receive the gold medal with the blue ribbon and the small white stars. She herself had been a registered nurse in World War I and her husband was a veteran and Legionnaire. Her two grown sons were now in the

Army. On a table in her home is Lewis Hall's album containing pictures from Panama, Hawaii, China, and the Philippines. As a closing chapter to the pictorial record of a long Army career she could now add a citation beginning:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action above and beyond the call of duty . . ."

At Rhode Island State College, Henry Gadrow and his wife stood on a platform and listened wonderingly as Major General Sherman Miles read a similar citation for William Fournier. It was the first detailed news they had received in three years of the silent, self-contained boy who had grown up in their home. It told them, in cursory official language, that Bill Fournier had become a national hero.

Captain Charles Willis Davis

A REBEL YELL ON GUADALCANAL



On Galloping Horse Hill, Guadalcanal, January 12-13, 1943

WHEN Captain Charles Willis Davis landed at Guadalcanal, in December, 1942, he already knew something about tramping long hours through woods and swamps with a gun in his hand.

When he was no more than six years old, his dad used to take Willis and the bird dog on quail hunts through Bear Creek Swamp and along the Sipsey River bottoms, down in southern Alabama. Sometimes the boy had a hard time keeping up, but it was either that or get lost. Willis was born in Gordo, February 21, 1917, in a region of red-dirt cotton farms, piney woods and rivers. His father did some farming outside of town, and ran the drugstore or the sawmill in Gordo between times. He liked to hunt and fish, and most of the time he took the boys with him.

So when Willis talked with the battle-worn Marines at Henderson Field, and learned firsthand about the jungle trails and muddy rivers that lay beyond the borders of the airfield, he wasn't unduly awed. He figured he could get around in the wilderness if he had to.

Other matters he wasn't so sure about. He listened attentively as the Marines pointed out the high hills south and west of the field and told him that the Japs would have to be driven from those heights. He absorbed every possible detail about the night-fighting tactics of the Japs, their snipers, bunkers, mortars, grenades, and guns. Learning about the Japs was his business as a part of the forward echelon of the Twenty-fifth Division.

Captain Davis was executive officer of the Second Battalion, Twenty-seventh Infantry. He was part of the division that was to take over Guadalcanal from the Marines and finish the bloody job of clearing out the island.

He was an officer who had come along fast. Back at the University of Alabama, where he had pitched for the Crimson Tide baseball team, he had been a member of the ROTC. When he was commissioned a reserve second lieutenant at the end of his junior year, in the spring of 1939, he left the university to join the Army because Army life appealed to him more than the prospect of being a lawyer.

Officers and enlisted men both like Willis Davis. Mostly they call him "Gordo" after the town in which he grew up. They say he's a natural-born leader, but their liking goes deeper than that. He's a tall, lithe Southerner with a slow drawl and a grin as wide as his face. People gravitate toward Davis because they cannot help but respond to his instant liking for them.

His mother tells friends how he hardly ever had to study at Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery, where he went to school after the family had moved up from Gordo. He was one of those students who seemed to master an assignment without conscious effort. His brilliant aptitude gave him lots of time for mischief, and life in the classroom was a battle of wits between Willis and his teachers. "He always," his mother tells you, smiling, "mixed plenty of fun with his work."

He carried those same traits into the Army, quickly mastering the duties of a junior officer and making friends in all ranks from buck private to commanding officer. His service career took him from Fort Sam Houston, Texas, to Hawaii, where new divisions were being formed to meet the trouble that was rising in clouds over the horizons of the earth. It wasn't long before a silver bar replaced the gold on Davis' shoulders, and in time the twin bars of captain replaced the single bar of the first lieutenant.

Davis arrived at Henderson Field with the advance elements of his division on December 17, 1942. In the next few weeks the rest of the division arrived and went about the business of taking over the front lines from the Marines. Dressed in green twill coveralls, carrying two canteens at their hips, grenades in their pockets and guns over their shoulders, the men of the Twenty-fifth swung down Marine-built trails into the rugged hills beyond Henderson Field.

It wasn't long before they knew the nature of the battleground

and the enemy. The hilltops, for the most part, were grass-covered and barren of trees. The jungle in between was so dense that if a man moved twenty feet from a comrade he was utterly lost. To find their way back, men blazed trees with their jungle knives as they advanced. Later, if all went well, bulldozers followed, knocking out trails over which jeeps could travel to bring up supplies and take back the wounded.

On battle maps, the hills were numbered. There were hills 52, 53, and 87. There was Mount Austen, dominating all the country. In between hills 52 and 53 ran a series of four more or less parallel ridges, and all these crests were held by the Japanese. It was toward this particular part of the battle area that Davis' battalion marched, the second week of January, 1943.

On January twelfth, two days after Hall and Fournier had won deathless glory for themselves in another part of the jungle, the soaked and weary men of Davis' battalion were at grips with the enemy. Two companies of the battalion had successfully advanced over two of the four ridges. When they reached the base of the third ridge, they reported back to battalion command post that they were pinned down by Japanese fire coming from above them. Not only were they unable to advance, but their way to the rear was also covered by fire.

As battalion executive officer, Willis Davis' duty was not that of an assault leader. At this critical point, however, he volunteered to go forward to the trapped units with the major's instructions. Taking with him a radio operator and runners, he made his way to the forward companies. Behind the shelter of a steep bank, he conferred with the company commanders, and in his easy Alabama drawl detailed the orders of the major:

They were to dispose machine guns in such a manner as to cover the advance up the hill. Davis himself would find a suitable observation post, and with his portable radio he would direct a mortar barrage on the strong point. After mortar preparation, selected units would advance, swinging wide and coming in on the Japs from the flank or rear.

In more informal language, they'd look for a blind spot. There was no use walking straight into a gun muzzle. You looked for a safe approach, got as close as you could, and threw grenades. If

there was no safe approach, why, that was just too bad. But you looked for it.

Davis located his observation post and the operator ran up the aerial of the radio set. Presently Davis was talking, giving instructions to the mortar batteries. Not long after, our shells were exploding on the crest of the third ridge, directed by Davis' calm drawl.

But at the same time, a Japanese mortar shell exploded not ten yards from where Davis and his operator were lying. The men jerked around and looked at the crater.

"They've got us spotted," Davis murmured.

"They can see the aerial," the operator suggested.

Another mortar exploded near by, throwing dirt on them. Hastily the two men pulled down the aerial. Somewhere across the rough, brushy terrain, Jap mortar gunners were using the aerial for an aiming point. To leave it up would give the enemy gunners a chance to correct their fire until a shell came accurately to its base. That would be the end.

For Davis and his radioman, mortar observation became a kind of grim game. With aerial down, they waited until an American salvo landed on the crest.

"Run up the aerial," Davis said. "Make it snappy."

Up went the aerial and Davis talked fast: "More to the right on the next one." Or, "Shorten range a hundred yards."

Back came the confirmation, and with it came a Jap mortar, showering dirt and stones on the two half-prone men.

"Down with that aerial!"

And down it came, while the two waited for the next American salvo. The game went on for some time, while nerves grew tighter and tighter.

Mortar and machine-gun preparation came to an end, and murmured orders started the platoons upward. They clawed their way halfway up the hill, almost under the muzzles of the Jap guns, and there they were pinned down again, unable to go a foot farther.

Captain Davis left his radio and crawled upward with the advance elements. As the men lay on the ground, halfway up the hill, behind whatever protection they could find, night came.

There was no sleep that night. Now and then a Jap grenade bounced among them and exploded. Now and then, out of exasper-

ation, the Americans hurled a grenade back up the hill. Thus they lay, almost within reach of each other, waiting for dawn.

During the night, Davis decided that there couldn't be so many Japs up above. What made them formidable was their field of fire. They had all the advantage of position. There was only one shallow draw, so slight as to be hardly noticeable in the general contour, leading toward the top.

"The Japs," he thought, "have got us dead to rights."

When morning came, Davis informed the nearest officers that he was going to take a few volunteers and go to the top of the hill. It seemed like suicide, but on the other hand there was little safety in lying where they were, within grenade-throwing distance of the Japs. Something had to be done. The stalemate couldn't continue.

Four men volunteered to go with Captain Davis. They were Sergeant Russell A. Ward of Woburn, Massachusetts; Private Oren Lee Woodward of Oil City, Pennsylvania; Private Joseph Stec of Long Pine, Nebraska, and Staff Sergeant William Curran of Worcester, Massachusetts.

"Come on, boys," Davis said, "let's climb up Gallopin' Horse Hill and take a look around." That was the name they had given the third ridge—Galloping Horse.

"Good luck," the officers murmured.

"Guess we'll need it, maybe," Davis replied.

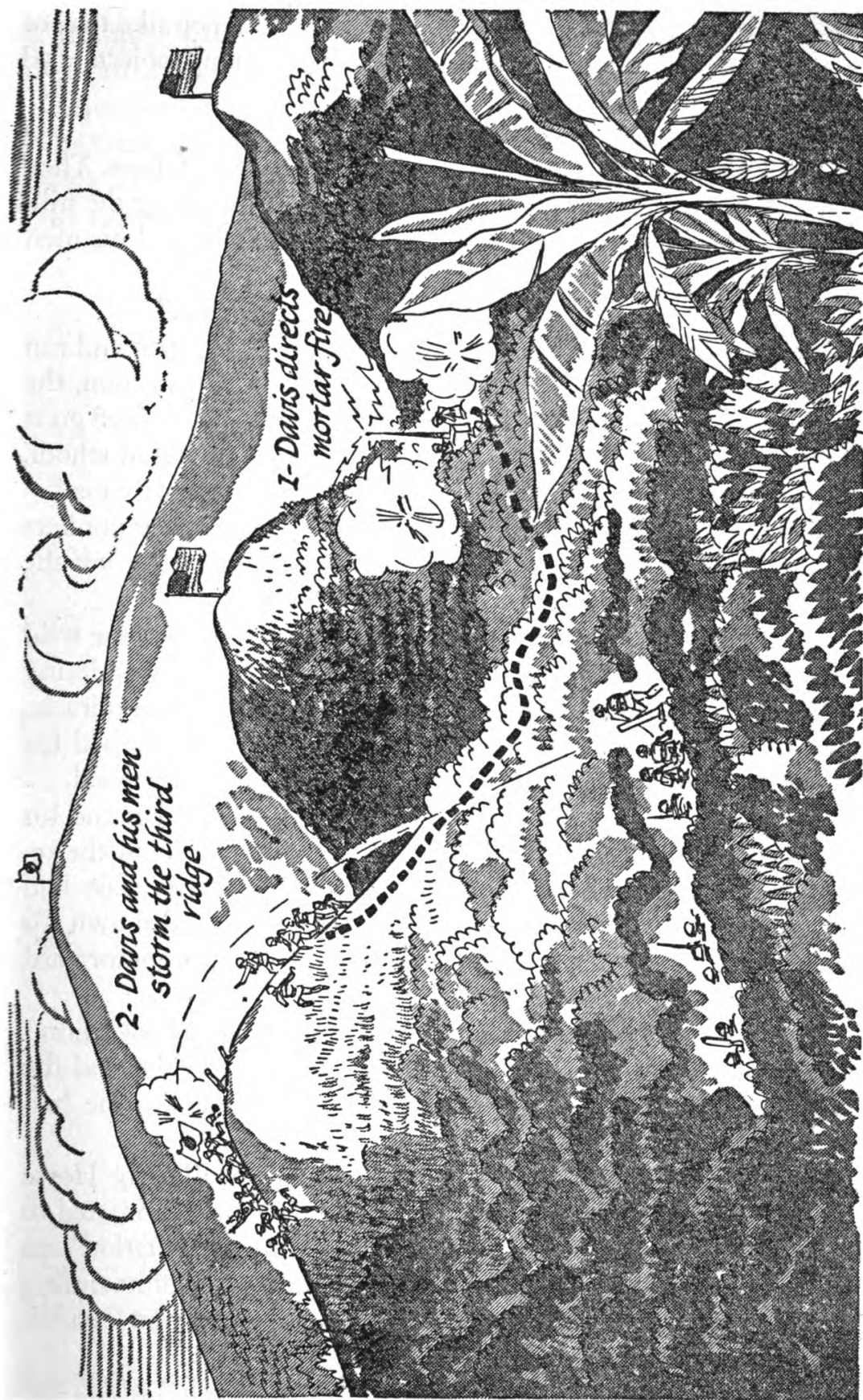
Led by Davis, the party crawled up the shallow draw toward the Japanese bunkers on the ridge. For all they knew, a gun might be trained down the draw and its torrent of lead might find them at the next slight turn, but this was a chance they had to take.

After they had scrabbled upward an interminable distance, Davis took a quick peek over the edge.

"Get out your grenades," he whispered. "They aren't but thirty feet away."

They drew the safety pins from grenades, took swift glances at their targets, and pitched. Without waiting for the explosions, each man drew another grenade and threw it. The next moment two Japanese grenades landed in the draw, squarely in the midst of the five men.

Here, the unpredictable fortunes of war took a hand. One gre-



nade failed to go off entirely. The other gave off a pop like that of a cap pistol. Davis looked at the two small, round objects and sweated.

"This," he said to himself, "*is it.*"

The two grenades were a notice that more would follow. They gave Davis two choices. He could either retreat or go up the hill. To stay where he was meant that sooner or later he and his men would be blown to bits.

"Boys," Davis said gently, "*it might as well be now.*"

He jumped to his feet yelling, sprang out into the open and ran for the top of the hill. Lifted out of themselves by his action, the four men came with him, screaming like banshees. They fired guns and tossed grenades as they ran. It was like being let out of school. Like release from prison. The five men went momentarily mad.

The Japs took fright. A dozen of them leaped from their bunkers and trenches and started to run, but not one of the twelve left the top of the hill.

On the hillside a little below, the two companies heard the wild yelling, the shots and the crash of grenades. They lifted wondering heads from the ground, looked at the heights, and saw the miracle. Leaping to their feet, they too began yelling as they dashed for the crest. In a matter of minutes the entire ridge was occupied.

But nobody stopped on the third ridge. The Alabamian and his four companions were already going at a dead run down the reverse slope toward the fourth and final ridge. Davis' rifle had jammed in the first dash. He had thrown it away and drawn his pistol. Now he waved it and the companies came on, swept forward on the crest of a Rebel yell.

The reckless charge, like something out of a history book, didn't stop until the two companies had occupied the final ridge and the Japanese command post behind it, thereby completing the battalion's objective.

For his electrifying leadership in a crisis, on Galloping Horse Hill, Guadalcanal, Captain Charles Willis Davis was promoted to major and awarded the Medal of Honor. The presentation was made by Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon, commanding general of our forces in the South Pacific, in a ceremony on Guadalcanal, July 30, 1943.

For their part in the assault, the four men with Davis were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

After Guadalcanal, Major Davis led his troops brilliantly in the New Georgia campaign, after which he was returned to the United States, a lieutenant colonel, to enter the Staff Command School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Bill Nelson

HEAVY MORTAR OBSERVER



At Djebel Dardyss, Tunisia, April 24, 1943

NEAR the coast of Tunis, the Sedjenane River winds eastward through hills toward a large lake. The heights on both sides are rugged and almost barren, except for waist-high bushes that cover the ground so thickly a man has to force his way through them.

North of the stream rises the hill called Djebel Dardyss. In peacetime, the eminence of Dardyss has no particular importance. In April, 1943, however, it was a barrier to the last swift American advance into the German stronghold of Bizerte, less than thirty miles to the northeast. As such, it had an importance far beyond its merit as a bit of African scenery. To William Lloyd Nelson, heavy-mortar sergeant of the Sixtieth Infantry, the brushy crest of Dardyss had a special importance, because it was here, on April 24, 1943, that he was to help stop a German counterattack and earn the nation's highest award for bravery, the Medal of Honor. To the cheerful, dependable, Middletown, Delaware, farm boy and athlete, Dardyss was the flaming crisis of a soldier's career.

Nelson's rendezvous with Dardyss began on January 9, 1941, when he was inducted into the Army and sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey, for training. With other American youngsters not long out of high school, Nelson was a member of our first million. These were the men called to arms before Pearl Harbor.

His folks called him by his middle name, Lloyd. His fellow soldiers knew him as Bill. Because he was born on February 22, 1918, his parents came within an inch of naming him George Washington Nelson. Even George Washington could hardly have served his country more sacrificially than plain Bill Nelson.

Born on a farm near Dover, Delaware, Bill as a child was his father's inseparable companion. Together they rode the pickup to

the milk station. In early summer Bill sat on his father's lap and held onto the reins as the cultivator turned the red soil.

Like most farm boys, Bill had no fear of the dark or of distance. When he was still a tot, his family moved to a farm near Middletown, Delaware, and there came a night when Bill's sister, Betty, was sick and there was no man in the house. Mrs. Nelson, unable to leave the girl, asked the seven-year-old boy if he was afraid to go to the neighbor's house three-fourths of a mile down the dark road, to phone for a doctor. With no hesitation at all, the boy set out and ran the errand.

Bill entered with a will into Four-H Club work, taking prizes in his potato-growing project and winning silver cups at various fairs with his Holstein heifer, affectionately named "Mutt." In high school he majored in agriculture, and as a member of the Future Farmers of America he took trips of inspection and sight-seeing to Virginia and New England.

In high school, his compact, agile body and keen sense of teamwork won him letters in football, basketball, and baseball.

"Bill wasn't the flashy player," his coach testifies. "He was quiet and unassuming. He was a real team player, and seldom took a shot at the basket if there was anyone else in better position to make the toss. The team in Bill's junior year was one of the best ever to represent Middletown, going through the season without the loss of a game in Delaware league play. In his senior year, Bill was captain of the team and his leadership was inspiring."

For his all-round ability and qualities of character Bill came close to receiving the highest award his school could give him, just as he was later to receive the highest award his country could offer. In his senior year he was scheduled to receive the "sportsmanship award."

One fine spring day, however, the good weather was too much for Bill and several of his friends. Deserting their afternoon classes and the school track meet that followed, they made for a near-by lake and went swimming. A few days later his principal called him in, reproved him for playing truant, and told him:

"I'm sorry, Lloyd, but we won't be able to present you with the sportsmanship award."

Bill accepted the penalty without complaint. His own sense of

fairness told him that the action was justified. He gulped once, said "Yes, sir," and left the principal's office to ponder the lesson that high awards must be earned by consistently good behavior.

After graduation, Bill was faced with the necessity of choosing between agriculture at the University of Delaware and a business course at the Beacom Business College in Wilmington. He chose the latter.

At Beacom, he met the slender, blonde Rebecca Pyle, and as graduation day approached he began thinking about a job and marriage. He worked for several concerns, finally landing a position in the order department of the Hercules Powder Company.

So Bill worked, and planned, and looked forward to all the things a young American wants in his future: work, a family, plenty of outdoor fun, movies in the evening, and summer trips to the beach or lake. But his dream was abruptly interrupted on January 9, 1941. There was a call from his draft board, a physical examination, a free ride to Camp Dix, and an introduction to the olive drab uniform of the Army—an unfamiliar garb in those days, one that made the wearer feel a bit strange and self-conscious.

He trained at Camp Dix and Fort Bragg, and on September 8, 1941, came home on furlough to marry Rebecca Pyle. Just three months later came the fateful bombing of Pearl Harbor, and suddenly army training took on more meaning for the newly married couple. Lloyd was promoted to corporal and came home on leave to surprise Rebecca with the new stripes on his sleeve, and to tell her that he was now in an outfit called a "heavy-mortar section."

Sometimes they talked about a man's chances in battle. To his wife's worried questions Lloyd replied with the universal philosophy that sustains soldiers in battle.

"If your number's up, you'll get it," he said, "no matter what you do. If it isn't up, you'll pull through."

It was the soldier's way of saying that there is no use trying in advance to save yourself in battle. Therefore, you might as well forget that part of it, and train yourself to do a job.

The months passed and training became more pointed and serious, and on his leaves Lloyd told his wife and his folks that he was hoping to transfer to Ordnance.

"There's a chance," he told them, "that the captain will recom-

mend me for Officers' Candidate School. That'll mean an Ordnance commission."

Had the war waited a little, Nelson might have gone to Officers' Candidate School. But big things were in the making. A Western Task Force for the invasion of Africa was in process of formation. Nelson's division, the Ninth, was to be part of it. One day in the fall of 1942, before his dream of a commission could be realized, sailing orders came, and Nelson was on a ship bound for the coast of Africa.

His baptism of fire came on the morning of November eighth, when his regiment went ashore fighting at Port Lyautey, on the Atlantic coast of French Morocco. During the bitter, three-day fight against the French, there wasn't great need for the heavy mortars, but Nelson and the rest came out of it a little harder, a little more experienced, and better able to take on the Germans and Italians in the Tunis campaign that was to follow.

After Lyautey, there was a winter of training and guard duty in the sandy hills of Africa. At Casablanca, in January, the Ninth Division marched in review before President Roosevelt, and there is a picture showing the Commander-in-Chief sitting in a jeep and the column swinging by. If you look closely, you can identify one of the noncoms in the ranks as Bill.

The regiment moved to Oran on the Mediterranean coast, there to act as seaport and prison camp guard. The spring months approached and the Allied armies began to move in on the Axis, forcing them back toward Tunis and Bizerte. The Sixtieth Infantry stripped itself for field action and in March moved into the lines at a place called Station de Sened.

Here occurred a brilliant bit of mortar action. A battalion of Italian infantry was caught on the road, marching into position for a counterattack. The heavy mortars were set up behind a hill. Nelson, now a sergeant, and other observers crawled up to positions of vantage and directed the fire. Mortar shells soared into the air, landing in the enemy column and completely disorganizing it. So effective and accurate was the mortar fire that the entire battalion surrendered.

Flushed with this preliminary success, the regiment moved to a spot in the line near Maknassy, there to occupy defensive positions.

As the campaign approached a climax, the Sixtieth was again moved by truck around the tightening noose, until Nelson and his fellow-soldiers found themselves at the town of Sedjenane, only a few miles inland from the Mediterranean coast.

Confident and battle-tested, the regiment went into position in the hills north of Sedjenane, ready for a final showdown with the retreating Germans. On the night of April twenty-second, Sergeant Nelson learned of the plans for tomorrow. Up ahead was the ridge of Djebel Dardyss, strongly held by the Germans. The Second Battalion was to lead the attack, and the mortars were to go along. The objective was a point halfway up the ridge.

Early in the morning, under their own barrage, they advanced, and by nightfall the battalion had reached its objective, and the men wrapped themselves in blankets and snatched brief intervals of sleep among the rocks and heavy brush of Dardyss. Under cover of darkness, the First Battalion moved up to the right of the second, and the Third Battalion came up on the left, until the three battalions were in line.

Violent action was brewing for the next day, April twenty-fourth. The Americans were advancing too swiftly for German comfort. Something had to be done to stop them. Dardyss was important, because its height gave the possessor good observation over all the countryside.

As the first faint streaks of dawn appeared in the east, Nelson and his comrades woke to the sound of German thunder. High explosive thudded down into the rocks and bushes where they lay. Dirt and flying stone filled the air, and men pressed their faces into the earth and prayed. By the very severity of the bombardment they knew that a German counterattack could be expected. Nelson wondered what part his mortars would play in the action.

The mortar is the infantry's own artillery. It goes into battle with the foot soldier. There is a short barrel, like a length of stovepipe, only much heavier. The end of the barrel sits in a baseplate on the ground and the muzzle points skyward. A bipod supports the barrel.

Mortars are set up behind a hill where the enemy cannot see them. The reason for this is that mortar crews are peculiarly vul-

nerable to fire. To shoot the piece, one of the crew must either stand or kneel beside the barrel in order to drop the bomb-shaped shell into the muzzle. The shell falls down the barrel, hits a striker at the bottom, and shoots back out, turning over and over as it soars through the sky.

Since the crew cannot see their target, there must be an observer up ahead, who *can* see it. This man either radios or signals back the firing directions.

When the German attack came across the valley, up the slopes of Dardyss, Nelson was observer for his section. He led his mortars forward to an advanced position where they dug the baseplates into the ground, and set up the bipods. Nelson crawled ahead until he could see the reverse slope.

Down below him he could see the Germans advancing, small figures in field gray, moving swiftly from rock to rock.

Following his signals, the mortar crews placed an aiming stake in the ground in front of their guns. By lining up the barrels with the stake, they would have the muzzles pointing in the general direction of the target. For more exact direction, they would move the barrel right or left with the traversing screw.

Effective mortar fire depends on the observer's ability to see his target and his skill in directing fire. To do a good job, he must take a chance on exposing himself. With no thought of personal danger, Nelson advanced alone until he could see what was going on in front.

Ahead of him, the slope of Dardyss led down to the valley. Through the valley a road ran, and this road was in German possession, with German trucks still moving on it. On this side of the road, coming toward the hill, Nelson saw the target he wanted—a considerable concentration of Germans, not yet spread out for the attack. It was a golden chance, and he made haste to grasp it.

He signaled his fire orders: "Such and such a range, one round."

Presently a single shell was arching through the skies. He watched where it landed, then signaled back corrections:

"Left fifteen." Or, "Right five." (Meaning degrees left or right.)

Soon more shells were going over and Nelson was marking the explosions. When he was satisfied, he gave the signal for rapid

fire and the stream of shells found their way to the advancing Germans, pinning them down, scattering them, and breaking up the attack. In the words of the citation:

"He directed the laying of a concentrated mortar barrage which successfully halted an initial enemy counterattack."

Sergeant Nelson was too busy to realize that all this time he himself was under heavy fire. From German 88's and 105's off to the front and left came an accurate torrent of explosive, concentrated on Dardyss. From the other flank came an unending stream of heavy German mortar shells. And from the infantry in front came machine-gun and rifle bullets that ricocheted off rocks with a *z-zing*.

Some Germans succeeded in advancing up the hill. A battalion commander on the left of Dardyss reported later that from his position he could see the fight for the hilltop. He could plainly see little groups of men ducking from rock to rock, engaged in the bitter, personal game of hide-and-seek that front-line battles become.

Somewhere in this private, individual battle of men and small groups, Bill Nelson was moving forward, always seeking a better position from which to direct fire, supremely intent on making every shell count. Forgetful of self, he advanced within a few yards of the nearest Germans.

At the height of the battle, the air above Nelson's head split apart with a violent concussion that blotted out all sound. When the acrid fumes blew away, Nelson was lying still, mortally wounded. It may have been a German potato-masher grenade or it may have been a mortar shell.

Presently Nelson's senses returned. He felt no particular pain, but rather a numbness. He found that he could move.

So, when he should have crawled back to be treated, he moved forward instead, closer to the Germans, to keep on with his job of directing fire. According to the citation:

"With his duty clearly completed, Sergeant Nelson crawled to a still more advanced observation post and continued to direct the fire of his section. Dying of hand-grenade wounds and only fifty yards from the enemy, he encouraged his section to continue its fire, and by doing so it took a heavy toll of enemy lives."



When night fell, the Americans were still in possession of the heights of Dardyss. Some hundred and thirty Germans lay on the slopes they had tried vainly to climb. Many of them were struck down by mortar shells skillfully directed by a blue-eyed, auburn-haired high school athlete from Middletown and Wilmington, Delaware.

On a rocky crest in Tunis, Lloyd's number had come up. Back in Middletown, his coach said that Lloyd was a team player whose leadership was inspiring. He was a team player on Dardyss, too, and the War Department, in awarding him the Medal of Honor, said: "His self-sacrificing devotion to duty was a priceless inspiration to our Armed Forces."

Joe Martinez

ARCTIC FIGHTER



At Chichagof Pass, Attu Island, May 26, 1943

PRIVATE JOSEPH P. MARTINEZ, twenty-three years old, was one of those men who had a sense of responsibility toward others. He was a husky, well-muscled young man with a face browned from many summers of work on the sugar beet and truck farms of northern Colorado, where rolling plains climbed upward to the Rocky Mountains. He had wide-set, cheerful eyes in an oval, good-humored face, and he had a strong, natural feeling of kinship for folks and animals. He liked living things.

The way Joe's mother put it, when they had the big ceremony in Joe's home town of Ault, November 16, 1943: "Joe was always doing things for others." Joe's mother, a bit tired from many years of cooking and washing for a husband and nine children, was proud on that crisp fall day, in her dark dress with the flowers pinned to it. She was proud because there were soldiers, and a band, and high-ranking officers from Fort Frances E. Warren and the Army post at Cheyenne, all of them doing honor to her son Joe.

Joe's father, Manuel V. Martinez, was present, standing on the platform in Liberty Park, his big shoulders stretching the seams of his leather coat, his powerful hands gripping the brim of his hat. His weather-tanned face was downcast as a brigadier general opened a blue box and revealed a gold Medal of Honor against a background of satin—downcast, perhaps, because for a moment the glory and the honor were more than a father could bear.

Later Joe's dad said quietly to eager reporters: "When Joe climbed that mountain, it was because he saw a job to do, and he did it. He never felt them bullets."

There was certainty in the senior Martinez's voice, and confidence that he could put himself in Joe's shoes and interpret Joe's

thoughts because he knew how Joe had developed from the day he was born at Taos, New Mexico, July 20, 1920.

Joe didn't have all the advantages that many boys have. The family was large, and when a boy was big enough he had to go out into the field to work. His father earned a living at farm labor, and it was the part of every able-bodied member of the family to contribute work and dollars to the family's support.

When Joe was seven, his dad moved a few hundred miles north, to the small town of Ault, Colorado, there to engage in truck farming of his own and to earn money working on the farms of others. They were beet farms, for the most part.

The Martinez family were Spanish people who still spoke the Spanish language, although Joe's grandparents and great grandparents had been born in this country. They liked their new town of Ault.

"This town isn't very big," Mr. Martinez once wrote. "It's a real quiet town. But the country is big and nice."

That's the way Joe saw it, too, with the high Rockies just to the west, and rolling cattle country to the north. Joe wanted to grow big with the country. He liked the land, and he liked farming and as he attended high school classes he saw himself as an independent farmer, working for himself. Joe was athletic, but he had no time for practice because there was always farm work to do after school. Joe didn't make touchdowns, but he learned to feed cattle and handle sheep and drive a tractor. If he didn't have time for the school locker room, however, there was one room you couldn't keep him from, and that was the school workshop.

In the workshop, Joe learned to use carpenter's tools. Working with wood became a passion with him, more alluring even than hunting for rabbits, jacks, and pheasants. He made furniture for the home.

"He made the cabinet in our kitchen," the father writes. "He made a dining table and ironing board. Almost all the furniture in the house was made by him and even the house was rebuilt by him."

When Joe's sister got married, Joe presented her with a cottage, built with his own hands.

Joe had to leave school in his sophomore year, because of family

needs. He took a job on an eighty-acre farm a few miles east of Ault, and driving to and from work in his '37 Chevrolet pickup with his older brother, Delfinio, he used to dream of running his own farm. He wanted to raise cattle up around Worland, Wyoming, where another brother, Antonio, already had a farm.

"We'll go into partnership," Joe planned with Delfi, as they rolled over dusty roads. "We'll go into stock raising on a large scale and be scientific about it."

When Delfi was drafted into the Army, the trips to and from work became a shade more lonely, and there was the feeling that the world was upset and dreams might have to wait. Joe could still squint his eyes and picture the cattle barns and granaries he would some day build, but now the vision was more remote.

Then Joe himself was drafted, on August 17, 1942, and his dreams gave way to war. He began a career of army training that was to take him from Denver to Camp Roberts, California, to Camp Butner, North Carolina, to Fort Ord, California, and finally to Seattle where his battalion boarded a ship for an unknown destination.

When Joe sailed with his infantry battalion from Seattle on April 13, 1943, he could tell from the way the sun rose and set that the ship was headed north. From this, he could guess what lay ahead.

Up there, reaching out from the Alaska Peninsula toward the homeland of Japan, were the Aleutian Islands, and on several of these islands the Japanese had established themselves, thus actually occupying United States territory. On two of the islands, Attu and Kiska, the Japanese were garrisoned in force.

Joe must have leaned against the rail and thought about it, some. He must have wondered if he was to be part of a combat team that would re-establish the American flag on the treeless mountains of Kiska or Attu.

That something more than garrison duty was in store for his division was evident on May first, in Cold Bay on the Alaska Peninsula. On that day, from the rail of his ship, the Colorado farm boy could see destroyers, cruisers, battleships, transports lined with men, and even an aircraft carrier. All the way to the fog-blurred horizon the sea was full of ships.

This was the rendezvous for battle. It was the coming-together

of the storm of men and high explosive that would shortly be loosed on Attu.

Joe's stout heart must have strained at the sight with a sense of irresistible power, because a man cannot look at a great task force and remain unmoved. It is when a fleet gathers, or a division passes by on parade, that the feeling of terrible might strikes the soldier.

Later, it's different. As an army marches on its objective, it breaks up into smaller and smaller groups, until the mighty army becomes a platoon or a squad, or sometimes only a few men in a ravine or on a hill, with nobody near to help. Then the world narrows to a few feet of ground and the sense of greatness and irresistible might disappears. The soldier's quarrel with the foe becomes a private and individual matter, and how he conducts himself depends on what is inside of him. It depends on what has been put there by his parents, his friends, his schoolteachers, and all the little incidents of his life.

Joe didn't know all that, then. What he saw at Cold Bay was the most awesome assemblage of hitting power he had ever seen. It had been a long time in the making, back in the shipyards, shops, and camps of the United States, but now it was here, preparing to strike.

Joe and his fellow-soldiers aboard the transport were equipped for the conditions under which they would fight. They had knitted wool caps to wear under their helmets, blanket-lined Alaskan field jackets that hung to the hips, and high leather Blucher boots.

They were given rubberized rain suits consisting of jackets and baggy pants. Down-filled sleeping bags would be issued to them before landing, or brought to them later, after they had assaulted some unnamed beach.

The soldiers were told that warming tents would be set up as the fighting progressed. These were tents containing coal or oil stoves in which men could stop on their way to or from the front-line positions, to dry themselves and thaw out the chill. From all these details, Joe and his comrades knew that they were going to fight a war far different from the desert warfare for which they had been originally trained in California.

The task force moved out from Cold Bay, heading southwest-

ward to its fog-draped destiny, and the soldiers studied a relief map on a table, just off the galley below decks. This map told them exactly where they were going and what they were to do.

It was a map of the island of Attu. It was more like a range of mountains rising from the sea, than an island. There were no trees on it. Only barren rock, and snow, and the matted, marshy grass known as tundra.

Most of the island was uninhabited. The Japs held the narrow eastern end, where bays made deep indentations in the hills. On the southern shore was Massacre Bay, so named for some ancient battle of native Aleuts and invaders. Along the northern shore, from west to east, were Holtz Bay with a western and eastern arm, and Chichagof Harbor. The Japs were strong in Holtz Bay, where they were building an airport. They were strong in Chichagof Harbor, which was their headquarters.

Joe and his friends gazed at the map, facing the job they had to do. Part of the force was to land on the north shore, just beyond Holtz Bay. Another part was to land at Massacre Bay on the south shore. Between them they would drive the Japs out of the hills and off the beaches, pushing them down into Chichagof Harbor for a final reckoning. Between two and three thousand Japanese had to be dealt with, before the issue would be decided.

To keep their minds off the coming battle, men played cards, read books, and attended movies. There were sardonic remarks about the fog, the gales that swept the sea, and the cold rains. Men learned about the williwaw, the strange Arctic wind that blows up and down.

"It will blow down your neck into the seat of your pants," men were told.

The ship was a crowded place, and the close quarters became more intolerable when the men learned that D Day had been postponed because of weather. The deck of the transport was a literal forest of unloading booms and antiaircraft guns. All available space was taken up with landing barges. Overside hung life rafts, and cargo netting down which the men would climb into the barges, thirty-four men to a barge.

As D Day approached, Joe and his fellows were issued more items. Boxes of rations. Cans of alcohol with which to cook hot

meals in the field. Extra ammunition. Extra clips of twenty cartridges for the Browning automatic that Joe carried. A compressed-air charger for the lifebelt each man wore around his waist. A first-aid kit with sulfa powder and sulfa pills.

There was a stir the night of May tenth, a feeling of mounting tension, when men were told that breakfast tomorrow would be at 4 A.M., and H Hour, the moment of departure from the ship, would be 7:40.

Next morning, after a breakfast of ham and eggs and toast, Joe waited for H Hour. For several hours, he and his fellows waited while Joe's commanding officer, Colonel Frank L. Culin, went ashore for a preliminary reconnaissance.

When a soldier faces his first battle, his thoughts turn inward upon himself. He doesn't think about strategy or tactics. He wonders, instead, how he will acquit himself under fire. Will he be afraid? What will he do when the bullets clip past his head? He thinks this way, because he has never done anything like this before. He has never been up against the real thing. His throat goes dry and he stares blankly at nothing.

There was plenty of activity aboard ship to spare the soldier his own thoughts. Landing barges going overside, guns and ammunition and boxes of rations going into them, sharp commands and bustle. Finally word came back by radio that the landing beach was clear and the invasion could commence, and men went down the netting, misshapen with rucksacks, lifebelts, entrenching tools, canteens, cartridge belts, and slung rifles.

"We'll go light," Colonel Culin had said earlier. "We'll go ashore fighting."

As it turned out, they didn't have to leap off the landing ramps directly into battle. The beach on which they landed was undefended. It was a narrow strip of rock and sand just beyond Holtz Bay. It was difficult for the landing barges to make their way past jagged rocks to the tiny beach, and perhaps the Japs thought no force could ever get ashore at this spot.

Meanwhile, as the troops were coming ashore, the warships four miles out had turned their guns on Holtz Bay and the hills behind it, and Joe heard the swish and scream of shells and the booming crash of high explosive.

Beyond the narrow strip of beach was a ledge of mushy tundra, backed by a cliff hundreds of feet high. To surmount this cliff and reach the high ground overhead, soldiers climbed single file up a ravine, grabbing rocks and pulling themselves up by hand.

As long as Joe was on the beach, the feeling of might and power was with him. He could see the landing barges, the growing dumps of ammunition and food, the mobile cannon coming ashore. He could sense the battleships out there in the mist and hear the sound of steel they were throwing. Below the cliff were bustle, activity, the sight of many men, the awareness of the amphibious power of the task force.

But once over the crest of the cliff, facing the barren slopes and peaks of Attu, the scene was transformed. Here there was no bustle or activity, but only a few files of soldiers, moving forward cautiously from rock to rock, almost invisible in the dun landscape. Here were loneliness and hushed voices, and strained alertness, as hunched men moved cautiously toward their first contact with the enemy.

Joe soon learned the peculiar discomforts of the Aleutian country. The weather stayed close to freezing, rising slightly above during the day and falling a little below during the short night. There was snow in all the ravines and almost continuous snow above five hundred feet. Under the snow, boots plunged into icy water. The tundra was wet and chill, and melted snow seeped into the foxholes.

Joe learned how cleverly the Japs concealed themselves, how it was almost impossible to detect a machine-gun or mortar emplacement until you stepped on it. He learned how to use the slightest rise in ground as a protection from Jap bullets. Along with the others, he discovered the terror of the Japanese 70-mm. cannon, which could be raised to fire at airplanes or leveled to blast at ground troops. He learned that you could get close to a Jap emplacement if you were out of the direct line of fire. And he found, too, that when you closed with the enemy he rarely got out of his hole to fight, but stayed there playing possum, or fatalistically waiting for the inevitable end.

By May twenty-sixth, fifteen days after the landing, the Japs had been driven from Holtz Bay toward their final stronghold

in Chichagof Harbor. The southern force had cleared Massacre Bay and its surrounding hills, and now the two forces were joined in the wide upland valley rising toward the pass leading to Chichagof.

For several days, the Americans had been stalled at this critical point. The land was well suited to defense. To the left of the pass was a rounded knob called "Buffalo Nose," and to the right was a high, knifelike ridge known as "The Fishhook." There were Jap guns on both heights to command the ground between.

Just in front of the pass itself was a flat ledge of ground known as "The Bench," and on the front edge of The Bench were at least four Japanese machine guns, two heavy and two light. To win the pass, Americans had to take The Bench. To take The Bench, they had to cross an open valley, without protection of any kind.

Had the Americans been able to get ample artillery, the task might have been easy, but no heavy artillery could be hauled up into those mountains. The Jap positions were beyond effective mortar range. The only artillery preparation was from the small, but accurate 37-mm. guns. Heavy machine guns helped out by spraying The Bench and the pass at long range.

At 6 P.M. on May twenty-sixth, Joe Martinez's battalion was ordered to attack The Bench. Well spaced apart, moving slowly across the frozen ground, the attacking echelon approached the slope leading to the position. They waded through patches of slushy snow, stepped gingerly over barren rocks, and stumbled over clumps of tundra. Toward the left flank of the leading wave was Joe's platoon.

Before they had gone far, a mortar shell landed in the waves of men, and the men nearest the explosion ran a few paces and dropped to the ground. Other mortar shells dropped and the sound echoed back and forth between the cliffs. Through the crashes the echelon moved forward.

Then came the bark and snap of light-caliber bullets. A hit man cried out. Clumsily dressed men ran a few steps and threw themselves full length, squirming sideways to reach the protection of rocks and bulges in the ground.

In official language, the men were "pinned down by intense enemy fire" at the base of the slope leading to The Bench.

It was hard to get the attack started again. The men were worn from continuous fighting. Their unshaven faces were dirt-grimed, their eyes hollowed from lack of sleep. There was no cover. To end the impossible situation, the battalion commander selected a platoon to move up to The Bench regardless of casualties.

But before the order could be carried out, one lone figure rose from the ground and started up a small hogback leading to The Bench. It was Joe Martinez, his Browning automatic rifle gripped in his right hand, the pockets of his Alaska field jacket bulging with grenades.

Joe wasn't in the platoon that had been ordered to advance. Why he got up alone to move forward is a secret that will never be told.

Witnesses say he moved steadily up the steep part of the slope, stopping now and then to wave his arm and beckon others to follow. A few did, and presently a part of the battalion was moving forward, led by a private.

Where the slope grew steepest, the men were again pinned down by fire, their bodies hugging the rocks, their faces strained. Back across the valley, an American light machine-gun section opened up on The Bench to keep Jap heads down and encourage the battalion to go on.

But no man moved until the lone figure rose once more. Joe Martinez began climbing the rocks, thrusting the butt of his Browning into the snow to keep him from slipping back. Once again he paused to urge the rest forward, as if he could pull them along by the strength of his muscular arm. He could see, now, where the Jap fire was coming from. It was above him, and a little to his right.

He pulled himself up another few feet, lay on his side, and pulled a grenade from his pocket. Yanking out the safety pin, he held his thumb over the lever for a moment while he glanced upward. Then he let the lever fly up and counted off two of the five seconds that would elapse before the explosion. After that, he threw, and heard a scream from above.

A couple of other soldiers, seeing that Joe was unhit, followed him up the slope.

Joe leaped to The Bench, his Browning pointed down. Moving along the edge, firing short bursts, he eliminated one emplacement

after another. Jap fire dwindled and died. The men below sensed that something was happening above—something miraculously in their favor. Presently other men were on top The Bench, mopping up what was left.

Now the attackers began to receive fire from the saddle of the pass up ahead, and from the high ground of Buffalo Nose and Fishhook. They took cover behind rocks and humps in the ground while company and platoon commanders regrouped their men and planned what to do.

One company was ordered to climb the hill to the left of the pass. Another was ordered to go up against the pass itself. But once again, without mortar fire or some kind of preparation, the idea was more than human flesh could entertain.

Joe must have been thinking that here was a job that was almost finished, and merely needed a little extra push to complete it.

The order to advance was repeated, but only one man moved. Once again it was Joe, and now he was walking across open ground, with no protection whatever.

Up ahead, out of the ground, he saw a brown arm flash and a grenade arch toward him. He ignored it, and it rolled past him and exploded. Joe fired at the arm. He saw Jap helmets showing above the tundra, and each was a target for his Browning.

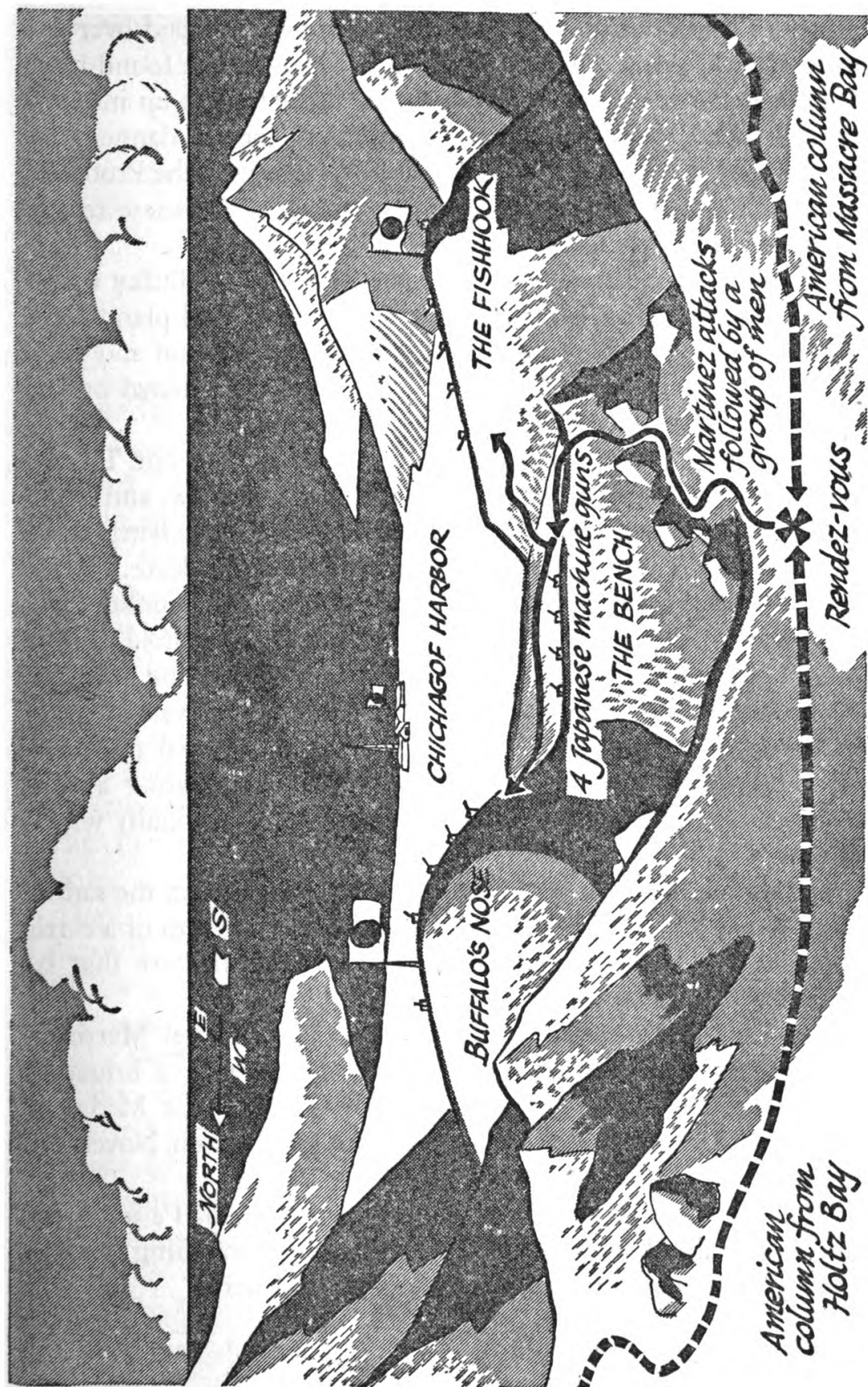
In a way, it was like snap shooting back home. Joe's father writes: "He was fond of hunting. He used to go out almost every evening to hunt rabbits, jackrabbits and pheasants. He used the .22 single-shot gun."

It isn't easy to hit a running rabbit or a flushed pheasant with a single-shot .22. It takes a natural, instinctive quickness. But this Colorado farm boy had it. He had it up there on The Bench, whenever a target showed.

It was well that he did, for Joe's only protection as he moved over the bleak rocks of Attu was his own accurate fire. It was his own .30-caliber bullets that drove Jap fingers from the triggers of their machine guns.

He jumped into a trench, fired a quick burst, then paused to put a new clip in his automatic. Later, men counted five Japs here.

Presently, he was moving again, well up into the saddle, ignoring



grenades that bounced and exploded near by. He stood over another trench, firing down. Two more Japs, later, were found here.

Behind the one-man assault, the companies moved up into the pass. Exalted, oblivious to any thought of mortal danger, Joe moved over the crest of the pass and looked down on the Promised Land. Here were the slopes leading to the final Japanese refuge—Chichagof Harbor.

On the reverse slope were more enemy positions. Bulky under his jacket, Joe placed one foot on a ledge of rock and planted the other in the snow. He sighted along his Browning gun and fired down at helmets he could plainly see. Angry, frightened bullets snapped at him and grenades burst near.

Now, at the height of his triumph, Joe's luck ran out. Enemy guns found him at last. He fell backward into the snow, and when his comrades found him later, the butt of his rifle was lying at his shoulder, as though he were still fighting, even in death.

With the taking of the pass and of the heights to either side, the enemy were penned in their final, small stronghold. Three days later, shelled from the sea and assaulted by land, the last thousand Japanese under their colonel, Yamasaki, were to dash through the American lines at night, assailing our rear positions, our hospital tents, and our command posts, penetrating almost to our heavy artillery on the beach before they were finally wiped out.

But of this, Joe Martinez knew nothing. High up on the saddle overlooking Chichagof had ended Joe's personal dream of a cattle farm near Worland, and a house filled with furniture that he would build this time for himself.

But Joe's father probably had it right. As Manuel Martinez, seventy-one years old, said to Frank L. Culin, now a brigadier general, when Culin presented the parents with the Medal of Honor at Liberty Park in the little town of Ault, on November 16, 1943:

"Joe never felt those bullets. He just figured he had a job to do and went ahead and did it. He was doing something for the others, the way he always used to do around here."

Dave Waybur

RECONNAISSANCE TROOPER



At Agrigento, Sicily, July 17, 1943

AS hundreds of landing craft bounced their way through choppy water toward the southern shore of Sicily, in the early morning hours of July 10, 1943, one young American officer waited aboard his ship, impatient for action.

From the ship's rail, First Lieutenant David Crowder Waybur was watching the second great seaborne invasion of history. The first was the American landing in Africa on November 8, 1942, and he had also been a part of that. Now Africa was an Allied base, and the second step in the advance on Europe was taking place.

Off to the right, the famed First Division was landing at the port of Gela. Beyond them, other American divisions were moving forward under thundering barrages toward their assigned beach areas. Farther to the east, the British Eighth Army was going ashore.

Here at Licata, Waybur's Third Division under Major General Lucian K. Truscott was pouring out of landing craft onto beaches and storming into the hills beyond. Objectives were definite and complicated, but the spirit was simple. It was—

“Hit the beach and keep going!”

It was what Dave Waybur wanted, too, but the nature of his command prevented him from going ashore in the first wave. He was an officer of the division's Reconnaissance Troop. It was a picked outfit of 190 men and seven officers, divided into three combat platoons and a headquarters service platoon. The troop's task was simple—and dangerous. In quarter-ton jeeps and larger half-tracks, the Third Recon had the duty of exploring the country ahead of the infantry, keeping in touch with a retreating enemy.

There were mortars and mobile 37-mm. cannon to deal with prepared defenses, and demolition trucks with dynamite and tools to deal with road blocks and obstructions.

Assaulting the beach was the infantry's job. Later, the men and vehicles of the Reconnaissance Troop would go ashore to roam the Sicilian roads and make things uncomfortable for the enemy wherever they could be found.

Waybur was under no illusions about what lay ahead. His eagerness to get into the fight wasn't the eagerness of ignorance. Before leaving the States he had spent a final hour with his folks. To his father, Robert T. Waybur of Piedmont, California, he had said:

"When I get into a real fight, I know I'm going to be scared, but I'm not scared of being scared. The only thing I really worry about is giving my men the wrong order at the wrong time. I don't ever want to let them down."

Dave had a healthy apprehension as he watched the lean, hard young men of the Third Division climb down the netting into landing craft. But his chief fear was that he might make errors of leadership. Under his direct orders were two sections, each one with four jeeps and an armored half-track, all of them mounting machine guns. He also had an 81-mm. mortar squad, a 37-mm. gun, and a demolition squad. Leadership of the gunners, radio-men, and drivers manning these vehicles was not to be taken lightly.

So he waited, fretting to be overside and on his way. Only in action could he find release from the tension that had grown more taut with every passing day of training and maneuvers. While he waited, the first platoon under Lieutenant John J. McCloskey boarded boats and headed for shore, and this served to increase Dave's impatience.

Reconnaissance Troop service wasn't Dave's first choice. Ever since he could remember, he had loved horses. He recalled the long sunshiny days on his mother's family ranch, high in the mountains at Red Bluff, California, where he and his sisters, Corinne and Robannie, had learned to ride as youngsters.

Then there was the time he had given up his job at the Safeway Stores to seek a chance to ride with a cattle outfit. Two years at the University of California and a few months in a grocery

store had been all the confinement his restless spirit could stand. In the big ranges of southeastern Oregon and Nevada, riding herd on thousands of white faces, he had found satisfaction at last.

"This is big country," he had written his father. "I'd almost rather go hungry out here than be prosperous in a city."

When the pre-Pearl Harbor army began forming, it was natural that Dave should seek service in the cavalry. People said the cavalry was obsolete. But the Russians were using it. And in mountainous country, cavalry could lug machine guns, automatic rifles, and light mortars into places no jeep or half-track could go. There would be a place for cavalry in this war, too.

He enlisted in the Army and went through thirteen weeks of indoctrination at Ford Ord, California. It was a dismal anti-climax to his graduation from basic training to learn that he had been assigned to a medical detachment. With a kind of quiet but grim determination he began hounding his superiors for a transfer, even going so far as to write a tactful but insistent letter to the commanding officer of the famous Eleventh Cavalry at Imperial, California, saying:

"I had a grand-uncle, Colonel James B. Erwin, who was a former commander of the Eleventh Cavalry and according to my aunt he thought it the best cavalry outfit in the country. I strongly want to get into the Eleventh Cavalry."

His persistence was rewarded with the transfer he wanted and after only a few months with the Eleventh Cavalry he was recommended for Officers' Candidate School at Fort Riley, Kansas.

In the end, his great hope of riding a horse into battle was thwarted. Two weeks after Pearl Harbor he was graduated a second lieutenant and assigned to a newly formed reconnaissance troop at Fort Lewis, Washington, where his dad had seen duty as a young officer in the First World War.

His folks met him at Reno, to drive him the rest of the way to camp, and as Dave climbed into the car at the station, a young officer ran after him, yelling:

"Here's your rope!"

It was Dave's calf rope. On the train trip from Fort Riley, Dave and his friend had entertained themselves at stations, lassoing posts, dogs, and children.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, Dave stated his soldier's creed in a letter to his father. It was the creed of attack, not defense.

"You've got to have the *will* to close with the enemy," he wrote.

Now he was waiting, aboard ship, for his chance to close with the enemy. Filled with all the natural fears of a soldier going into battle, he was impatient to dissolve those fears in action. In a way he typified all the soldiers landing in Sicily on that memorable day. He was on edge. Ready.

All the generals must have felt the atmosphere. They must have felt a little like football coaches who had done a good job of conditioning their teams for the championship game. They must have known they had a lot of Dave Wayburs in uniform, waiting for the pat on the shoulder, and the word, "Go in there and win the game."

At last, late in the day, Dave's platoon was loaded into an LST (Landing Ship Tank) and taken to the beach, only to find that the craft was so heavily loaded it couldn't be successfully beached. Not until after nightfall was the platoon able to find a spot at which the vehicles could be run onto shore.

Throughout the second day of the invasion, July eleventh, Dave's platoon waited for orders while the infantry smashed its way into the rugged hills north of the beach. Dave learned that McCloskey's first platoon had already reconnoitered roads, run into enemy fire, and lost two men wounded. Dave's restlessness mounted.

On July twelfth, orders finally came: "Move out to the right flank of the division near Riesi. The Third Battalion of the Thirtieth Infantry is over there. Protect their flank as they move north."

The men jumped into their vehicles and started inland. Northeast of the town of Riesi the platoon had its baptism of fire. Stopped by a road block protected by Italian guns, they backed up and took to the rocky fields. They worked their way around and came on the Italian positions down a side road guarded by high stone walls on both sides. At uncomfortably close range, the platoon encountered fire. Bullets rattled against the walls and overhead. With no chance to maneuver there was nothing to do but throw the gears into reverse and go back, even while Waybur was marking the location of the Italian position and reporting it by radio.

The situation might have been bad, but the fire was inaccurate and the platoon escaped without casualties.

For three days the platoon roamed the right flank of the division, eliminating lightly held road blocks, and finding undefended valleys through which the infantry could move northward. It was exhausting work, spiced with the constant threat of enemy bullets. Unsuspected by Dave and his men, it was only a curtain raiser to the main show.

On the night of July fifteenth, the platoon had just crawled under blankets in their bivouac area near Riesi for a badly needed sleep when the platoon's heavy radio came to life and a voice said in effect:

"Proceed to the left flank of the division to help in the battle for Agrigento. Start at once."

Agrigento was a sizable coastal town northwest of the landing beaches at Licata. Defended both by Germans and Italians, it was turning out to be a stubborn obstacle to the advance of the division.

Weary, half-awake men pulled their aching bodies erect and mounted their stubby, low-slung vehicles. Without headlights, in unfamiliar country, they felt their way fifty miles to the town of Favara, ten miles east of Agrigento, arriving there at daylight. Over a battle map, Dave studied the situation.

Coming into Agrigento from the north was a road. If reinforcements were permitted to come down that road, the battle for Agrigento might be a bloody, long-drawn-out engagement. Dave's Third Platoon and Lieutenant William Gunter's Second Platoon were to reconnoiter the road and stop any troops coming down it.

As Dave and Gunter listened, the air was vibrating with the express-train roar of shells passing overhead, and the earth was trembling with the continuous rumble of distant explosions.

"The German artillery is dug in at the base of the cliff at Agrigento," Dave was told. "Our own artillery is taking them on."

It was a bigtime artillery duel—a duel that was to result in a victory for American marksmanship, with most of the German positions blasted into silence. Under the roof of shells our infantry was working up the deep canyon and across the rugged hills toward the town. So much Dave learned.

The two reconnaissance platoons, more than twenty vehicles

strong, started out. The country was so mountainous that there was little chance to get off the road. Neither officer relished road travel. If they were to encounter prepared defenses, the defenses would certainly be trained on the roads. Roads were also the target for artillery fire. So, whenever possible, reconnaissance patrols took to the fields.

Finally they found a donkey trail leading upward over a range of hills, leading in the direction they wanted to go. They followed it, and presently found themselves overlooking their objective, a southward-heading road, leading to Agrigento. They swung their jeeps around so that the .50-caliber machine guns on their steel mounts were trained on the road.

Almost at once, there appeared on the highway below them a sight that made their blood pound and their eyes widen. Coming into view around the bend was a large enemy convoy. In the lead were scouts on tricycles. Behind them came trucks loaded with troops. One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . no less than thirty trucks, rumbling down to the defense of Agrigento.

Low orders were quickly passed. Gunners crouched behind their machine guns. The quiet was suddenly shattered by the swift bark of our .50-caliber guns pouring into the lead vehicle. The first volley set it afire. Men poured out of it. The other trucks stopped. Scouts jumped off their tricycles and leaped for cover.

While this was going on, the Third Platoon's radio was busy, telling headquarters where the convoy was, accurately locating it by coordinates so that artillery officers several miles to the south-east could pass orders to their gun crews.

Within five minutes, while a lively exchange of small-arms fire began between Reconnaissance and enemy guns, our shells were falling into the road, among the trucks.

Dave Waybur decided to attempt a bit of diversion. He beckoned to Sergeant John Begovich.

"Let's see what we can do with the bazooka," he suggested.

They took the piece of pipe and several projectiles and crept from rock to rock toward one of the lead trucks. The artillery shells weren't falling into the forward part of the convoy.

They came abreast of a truck with the enemy still inside, crouched

down for protection. They loaded the tube, ignited the shell, and sent it on its way with an accelerating *zoom*.

It landed fairly into the side of the truck, exploding with a roar and setting the truck afire. Men frantically jumped out onto the road, only to run into a stream of close-range fire from Sergeant Begovich's tommy gun.

The convoy never reached Agrigento. When its men were killed, wounded, or so dispersed that they could no longer be dealt with, the mission of the Second and Third platoons was done. They didn't have the strength or numbers to round up the enemy and take prisoners. Leaping exultantly back into their jeeps and half-tracks they pressed on starters, swung round, and headed speedily back to division headquarters.

At 6 P.M. of that day, July sixteenth, Lieutenant Waybur reported full details of the convoy action to General Truscott. In the back of his mind there may have been a feeling of a job well completed, and the need now for the rest that had been interrupted the night before.

Any such idea was quickly dispelled. The convoy action wasn't the entire performance. It was only one act. The climax was still to come.

"We're looking for one of our Ranger battalions," Truscott said to Waybur, after the young officer had finished his report. "They've got through the enemy lines, past Agrigento. They're somewhere in the neighborhood of Port Empodocle."

The twenty-three-year-old lieutenant, with all the stamina of his age, felt his knees imperceptibly buckle at the thought of taking again to the road. He wondered if he dared face his men with any such order. He wondered if he himself could stay on his feet another night.

Port Empodocle was some ten miles beyond Agrigento. There had been no contact with the Ranger battalion for some time. General Truscott wanted to get a radio-equipped half-track through to the battalion, so that he could gain contact and find out where they were and how they were doing. But he didn't make it an order. He merely put the case.

Waybur was tired after forty-eight hours of continuous fighting.

On the other hand, lieutenants didn't say "no" to generals. Calling down deep for his remaining starch, he straightened up and volunteered to go on the mission.

Back with his platoon, Waybur looked over his men. He named five jeeps and a half-track—about half the strength of his platoon. He selected his men carefully, leaving the final decision to them. Something warm surged through him, drawing away the fatigue, when every man expressed a willingness to go.

Riding down the road to Agrigento they passed infantry in position for the night. Dark settled down and a bright moon arose. Dave looked at it and wondered if its cold rays were good, or bad. At an advanced infantry outpost he brought his little parade to a stop.

"What's the road like, up ahead?" he asked the officer in charge.

"Heavily mined," the officer replied. "Also, they've got big oil barrels filled with rocks up there—about two hundred yards of 'em—to block traffic."

"Any of our infantry ahead of this point?"

"Some. They're working up the cliffs just this side of town."

Dave listened. There was no firing. It was a deceptively peaceful night. As they talked, an airplane came over them, flying low. Their ears told them that it was a German plane.

It circled over the outpost several times, and though Waybur and the infantry officer couldn't make it out against the night sky, the pilot must have seen the five vehicles clearly outlined against the moon-white road. At any rate, the engine suddenly changed its tune and the plane was diving on the road. The whistle of bombs cut the air and three quick explosions filled the area with flying fragments and rock dust.

As soon as fragments ceased to fly, Dave hurried from jeep to jeep to discover the damage. No man was hurt. Here and there, a piece of rock had torn through the side of a car. There was no mechanical damage.

The patrol got under way once more, and the outpost officer was glad to see it go. He wasn't eager to be host to a target that attracted enemy bombs.

Dave came to a cluster of Sicilian houses near Agrigento and here he dispersed his jeeps, while he went forward with Sergeant

Begovich, demolition expert, to blow up mines with small charges of TNT. Behind them, the jeep's guns were covering both sides of the road, ready to answer hostile fire.

The first mine was detonated, and to Waybur's surprise, no answering fire came from the near-by hills, nor from the town of Agrigento, which rose into the sky not a quarter-mile ahead of them. In the town itself Dave could hear spasmodic shooting, and he deduced that our infantry was already going through the streets, mopping up.

There was too much mine field to blow up. Dave and Begovich finally gave up the job, returned to their jeeps, and located a detour. Swinging back to the road beyond the mine field, they found two deserted pieces of enemy field artillery trained down the road. The crew had fled, perhaps only minutes before.

Leaving the half-track and the two jeeps back at the small cluster of houses, Dave took the remaining three jeeps and rode boldly into Agrigento. A few snipers' bullets whistled overhead. In doorways and at street corners were small groups of Seventh Infantry, still exploring their way, but firmly in possession of the town.

From each officer he encountered, Dave asked for news of the Ranger battalion.

"Haven't seen 'em," he was told.

So Dave moved out past the town, through moonlight, into no-man's land, still looking for the Rangers. Meanwhile, Sergeant Gross was waiting back at the half-track, with orders not to proceed until he was told that the way ahead was clear.

The road to Port Empodocle was in a steep-walled, rocky canyon. Going down it was like traveling down a prison corridor toward the death chamber. If they met fire, there would be no place to turn. They would only be able to back up.

It was long past midnight now. The date was July 17, 1943.

The three-car patrol, keeping a healthy interval between cars, coasted down a decline, rounded a corner in the canyon and drove up to the brink of a deep, narrow stream bed. The bridge across it had been blown out. The time now was about 3:30 A.M.

While Waybur looked about him for a way to cross the little gorge, he and his men heard the muffled sound of engines somewhere to the rear. As they hurried to their vehicles, peering down

the moonlit tunnel to see what was coming, two Italian light tanks appeared around the bend, turrets open, their cast metal snouts gleaming dully in the moon.

Waybur swung his eyes around, looking for some way out of the trap. The sides of the canyon were too steep. There was no cover on the slopes, no draw or gulley into which to retreat. Ahead was the gorge.

All Waybur had were three jeeps, each mounting a machine gun on an anti-aircraft pedestal. So high was the pedestal that the gunner would have to fire from a half crouch, without protection. Shouting orders, he dispersed his vehicles so that more than one jeep could bring its guns to bear. As he did this, two more tanks approached round the bend.

Before the tanks could close their turrets or swing their guns round, Waybur ordered all guns to open fire with their .50- and .30-caliber ammunition. A dozen things happened, all at once.

Private First Class Kenneth Lutz, Winnebago, Illinois, opened fire with his .50 caliber. His jeep was second in line, a little behind Waybur's jeep.

In Waybur's jeep, Private First Class Earl Ball, Eureka Springs, Arkansas, jumped behind his gun. At the jeep with him were Waybur and the driver, Corporal Dwight Farmer, Mount Pleasant, Arkansas.

Ball had just begun to swing his gun on the leading tank, less than two hundred yards away, when the tank opened fire with machine gun and 27-mm. cannon.

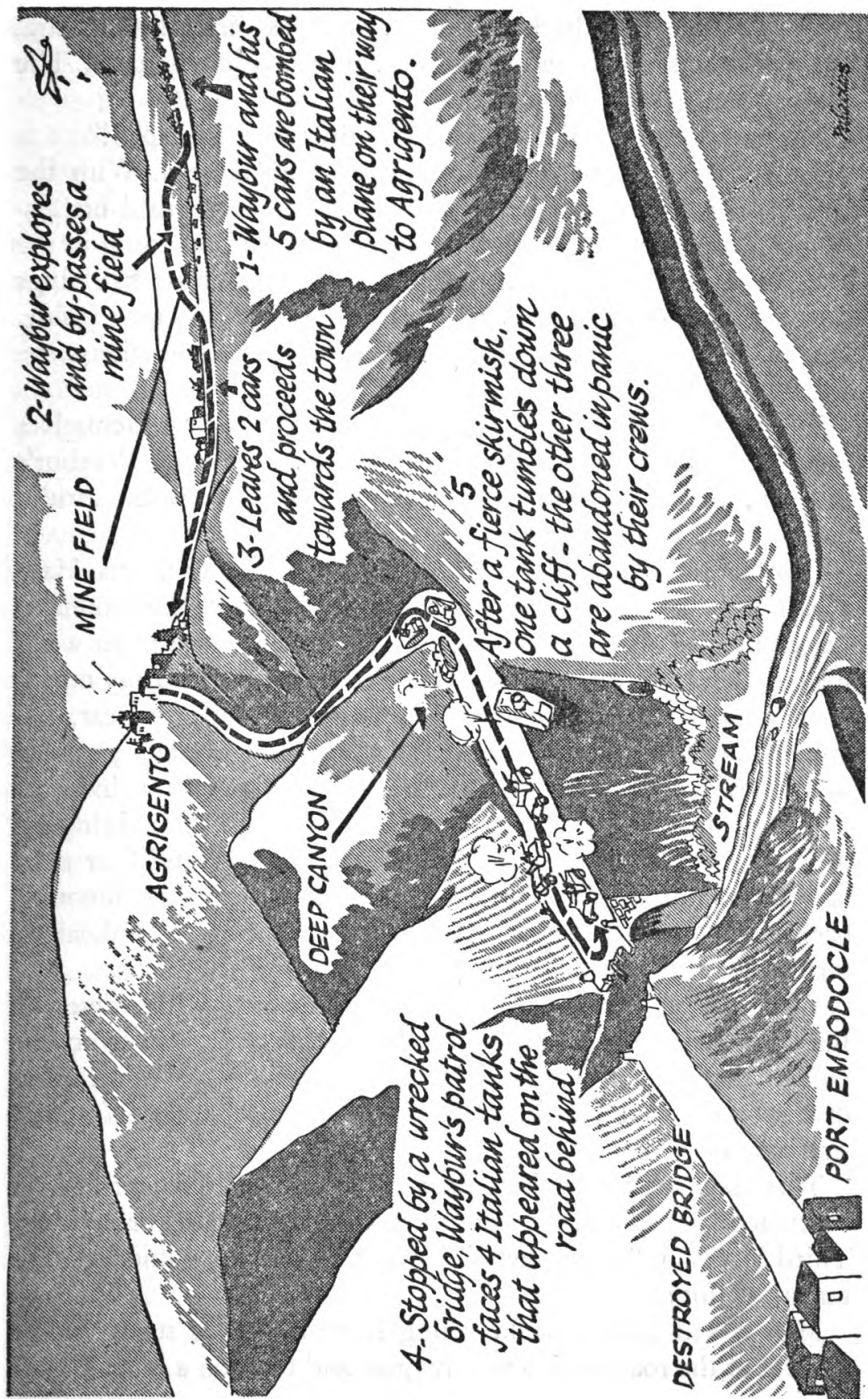
Farmer yelled, "I'm hit!"

Ball ducked to get away from the torrent of fire.

Sergeant Irvin M. Lile of Wood River, Nebraska, helping Lutz reload his gun in the support jeep, was wounded. Lutz was hit in the leg.

Waybur, standing in the road, was knocked off balance as two machine-gun slugs tore into his upper legs, one on each side. At the same instant, a 27-mm. cannon shell went between his legs, tearing his pants to shreds, and exploding in the road behind him. A fragment of it slammed into his back, near the base of his spine.

He staggered, and Lutz remembers him shouting: "Give it to 'em!"



Private Ball, now back on his feet and in direct line of fire, fiddled furiously with his gun, which apparently had jammed. The platoon was getting the worst of it.

Waybur yelled: "Take cover! Get to the side of the road!"

As the men obeyed, Waybur staggered to his jeep. With the lead tank not more than thirty yards away, he grabbed his .45-caliber Thompson sub-machine gun from the car. Standing in the bare road, in the bright moonlight, he poured forty-five slugs into the open ports of the lead tank, killing the two men inside. Out of control, the tank rumbled on over the edge of the gorge and tumbled into the stream bed.

The rest of the tanks thought better of it. Disposing themselves at a safe distance down the road, they opened fire on Waybur's position, while Waybur ordered his men behind cactus shrubs, telling them to dig in and keep shooting.

Only Private Ball and Private First Class Nolin Williams, Hannibal, Missouri, were unhurt. Calling Ball to him, the wounded officer handed the man his service pistol and told him to work his way back through the hills and warn Sergeant Gross not to come up with the half-track until he knew the road was clear.

Ball somehow got to the rear, though he had to run a gauntlet of fire from Italian riflemen in the hills. He found an infantry detachment and had them come forward with him, bringing medical men. Meanwhile, for two hours, Waybur and four men lay under constant fire from the tanks, now and then shooting back to convince the tank crew that the region was too unhealthy for any bold advance.

When Ball got back with the infantry, he found three deserted Italian tanks on the road. The crews must have decided from the volume of fire that they were facing a superior force. With great discretion they had left their tanks and departed shortly before the first rays of dawn.

That day, while Waybur, Farmer, Lile and Lutz were being evacuated to hospitals, the story spread like a grass fire through the Third Division. "Three jeeps," it went, "three jeeps knocked the tar out of four tanks."

Men talked about a wild young lieutenant who stood in the middle of the road with a tommy gun and took on a tank. David

against Goliath. David with a rapid-fire slingshot, and Goliath with steel sides and a cannon. David Waybur, reckless and fool-hardy in a cool sort of way. It wasn't long before there was talk of a medal, for this man who didn't seem to know the meaning of fear.

After some months in hospitals, Dave rejoined his platoon on the banks of the Volturno in Italy and did a bit of work that was entirely in keeping with his own severe code of conduct.

Near the town of Marzanello, Dave led a patrol into a German anti-tank position. Hurrying back, he gave the information to the commanding officer of eight medium tanks and volunteered to lead the tanks to the spot. Going ahead of the tanks in his un-armored jeep, across open terrain, Dave led the way into the middle of the enemy until direct machine-gun fire at seventy-five yards brought the jeep to a stop, wounding the gunner. Disregarding the fire, Dave stayed with the gunner and brought him to safety.

"There was Dave," writes his friend, Lieutenant Eugene Phillips, "riding in his jeep across open country with shells landing all around him. That was close. It was then that the boys took Dave in tow and wouldn't let him out again. His back wound was giving him considerable trouble, so after his decoration by General Mark Clark he was prevailed upon to go back to the hospital for further treatment."

Dave's hospitalization took him all the way back to his home in Piedmont, California, for a long reunion with the family. His father, looking at his son's emblems of courage and devotion to duty, the Medal of Honor and the Purple Heart, may have recalled that somewhere in a drawer was his own Purple Heart, awarded for wounds received in another World War, a quarter-century before. But he didn't talk much about it.

Not in the face of this new and brighter glory.

Fuzz Young

HE COVERED A RETREAT



On New Georgia Island, July 31, 1943

ON the high school basketball floor at Green Springs, Ohio, a practice game was in progress. In a mixup near the basket there was a sharp collision between two players and one of them fell to the floor, cracking his head against the hardwood.

The players bent over him, chafing his wrist, bathing his head in cold water. He regained consciousness almost immediately, and after the dizziness had passed he got to his feet and walked around.

"All right, Fuzz?" his fellow players asked anxiously.

Rodger Wilton Young gave his head a final shake and replied he was ready to continue play.

Three weeks later, Rodger began to complain that his eyes bothered him. At times, objects seemed distorted, and at other times everything became vague and dark. His worried parents took him to an eye specialist in the near-by city of Tiffin and waited tensely for the verdict.

"Rodger has a paralyzed nerve," the doctor said. "He'll have to wear glasses, and I'm afraid—" he paused, to think of some way to soften the blow— "I'm afraid he'll have to leave school. No reading for a long time."

In time, the boy's eyes were greatly improved. He obtained a job with the porcelain steel works in Clyde, a few miles north of his home in Green Springs, and his parents were relieved to see that his bubbling, exuberant spirit hadn't been affected.

But the bump on his head hadn't finished working its mischief. Not long after he was fitted with glasses, he began to notice a ringing in his ears, and the faint beginnings of deafness. These were not little matters. They were vitally to shape Rodger Young's destiny.

In the summer of 1943, Sergeant Rodger Young was somewhere in the South Pacific, learning the art of jungle fighting. He went to his closest friend, Staff Sergeant Al Rigby of Detroit, and said, in a worried voice:

"I'm going to the hospital to see if I can't get my ears corrected."

"Bothering you again, is it?" Rigby replied. "Well, don't worry. They'll fix you up."

After three days in the hospital he returned to camp to tell his friend in a discouraged voice that nothing had been done for him.

"If they can't fix my ears," he said grimly, "I'm not going to lead men into a scrap. Their lives might depend on my ability to hear some little noise in the jungle."

"You'll do as well as anybody else in the job," Al Rigby protested.

Fuzz Young didn't think so. "My ears have never stopped ringing since rifle practice at Shelby," he said moodily. "Now—" he shrugged his shoulders.

Had there been time, Fuzz might have been transferred to non-combatant duty where acute hearing wasn't so vital, but things were moving too swiftly for the transfer to be made. Shortly after his stay in the hospital, the regiment was loaded into troop-carrying landing ships and convoyed to the island of New Georgia, where American units were already engaged in a battle to the death with some seven thousand Japanese defenders of the vital Munda airport.

Rodger's regiment, the 148th Ohio Infantry, was landed on the island of Kokorana on July 19, 1943, and two days later was ferried six miles across the Blanche Channel to the New Georgia mainland to take up positions in the jungle for the forthcoming attack.

In the brief four-day lull before the assault, Rodger was torn between his desire to retain his command and a small voice that wouldn't be stilled, telling him that he was unfit to lead men in the battle to come.

While he learned the depth of the New Georgia mud and the treachery of a jungle floor in which matted vines and brush overlay the quaking muck, he debated his personal problem. He lay in his watery foxhole, testing his ears against the night sounds of

the jungle. Some noises, he could hear well enough. There was the strange bird that made little yelping sounds, very much like the pleading barks of his dog, Tippy, back in Green Springs, when Tippy wanted to go on a rabbit hunt.

But there were times when a fellow soldier whispered in an apprehensive tone that he heard a rustling in the treetops, and Rodger turned his face upward to hear it, too.

"Maybe a bat, or a flying fox," some soldier would mutter, and Rodger would shake his head in dismay, having heard nothing at all.

Where other men instantly heard the scratching noise of a large land crab, walking with proprietary boldness through the bivouac, Rodger's first warning of the crab's presence was the rasp of its sharp claws against the twill cloth of his jungle suit.

When a soldier took alarm at the sound of a scurrying bush rat and rose to his knees, rifle in hand, to deal with an infiltrating Jap, Rodger realized that he had felt no alarm because he hadn't heard the rat.

Before the regiment moved forward into its takeoff position, the noncom had his mind made up. Hiding his inner feeling of despair he went to his commanding officer.

"Sir," he said respectfully, "I'd like to be reduced to private and have someone else take my place as sergeant."

The captain understood. He knew that Rodger Young was placing the lives of his men above his own pride. With reluctance he reduced the noncom to private in the ranks and appointed another man to take his place.

Of all this, his parents in Green Springs knew little. Rodger had written them that his ears were being treated, but he had said nothing of his intention to return to the ranks. Mostly his letters were high-spirited assurances that all was going well, that his health was perfect, and that life in a tent was giving him a resistance to illness that he had never had in civilian life. All this was perfectly true—except for his hearing.

He wrote enthusiastically of certain red-letter days during his months of South Sea training. There was the time he had been billeted near a flying field and had ridden in the nose of a Flying Fortress, picturing himself as the bombardier adjusting his sights

on a Japanese airfield; and the time he and a dozen of his comrades had gone deep-sea fishing in a powered tub skippered by a bushy-haired Solomon Islander.

With a secret little grin, he described to his mother the GI method of laundering clothes. "I take my dirty clothes down to the creek and soap them up real good. Then I bang them against a large tree. Very primitive, but it works. The clothes smell clean, anyway."

Mostly, his letters were about the folks at home, reconstructing in words, on paper, what the family was probably doing at the moment. It was an escape from his army environment, an effort to recapture a life he had lost, and a promise of the more peaceful life to come.

Family ties were strong in the Young household. Rodger was the third boy in a family of four boys and one girl. He was born in Tiffin, April 28, 1918, only eleven months after Dick, the next oldest boy, had come into the world. He and Dick, almost as alike as twins, had carried paper routes together, picked berries, sold garden produce from house to house, and in many other ways contributed their earnings to a household in which money was never too plentiful.

Lying under the giant mangroves of the New Georgia jungle, Rodger could shut his eyes and recall the many good times the family had enjoyed together. There were the week ends when stove, blankets, tent, and provisions were piled into the car for a trip to Sandusky Bay. It was on one such trip that his dad had taught him to swim.

He could see the whole gang of them on the front porch of the Green Springs house, singing songs at night. The Young house had more musical instruments than a music store. There were the piano, three guitars, two banjos, two ukuleles, a clarinet and an accordion. The Young family could make a pretty fair orchestra when they tried. Rodger himself played the guitar, and when they all got together, twanging, blowing, and singing harmony, the result wasn't bad. At least, the neighbors said they liked it, and that was the acid test.

Even after Rodger and his oldest brother, George Webster, went with the Thirty-seventh Division to Camp Shelby, Louisiana, they took flying trips home in George's Ford.

Rodger meant every word he said, when he wrote home from the South Pacific that the motto of the Young family must always be: "One for all and all for one. When some member of the family gets a few pegs knocked from under him, we all help to put him back on his feet, stronger than before. That's the way it should be."

In one sober letter, he cautiously warned his folks about an eventuality that every soldier's parent had to be prepared for.

"I know I can write and tell you of my sickness, accidents, or the extent of my wounds, if any. I think my folks can take it. So until that time comes, you will know I'm in the best of condition and health."

With Rodger, as he crept into assault position on New Georgia, late in July, 1943, were the thoughts of his cheerful Ohio home, bringing a private and personal light to the dank murk of the jungle. On top of that, there was the feeling that now he needn't worry about his failing ears. Any mistakes in judgment from now on would affect only himself. The thought gave him a sense of freedom, a desire to test himself against the enemy.

On Saturday afternoon, July twenty-fourth, Rodger's Company B of the First Battalion, 148th Infantry, was lying concealed in the thick brush, waiting for the Sunday morning H Hour.

Fuzz Young knew that this was a large-scale battle. He knew that three divisions, the Forty-third, his own Thirty-seventh, and the Twenty-fifth, were taking part. Behind him were corduroy roads laid by engineers through wide swaths in the jungle opened by powerful bulldozers. On the offshore islands and reefs, powerful artillery batteries were massed. In jungle clearings, batteries of mortars pointed their snouts skyward. Tanks waited silently under the trees to deal with opposition wherever the jungle would let them through. All this meant POWER. Overwhelming power to crush the Japanese defenses down to the last isolated pillbox.

Early Sunday morning, July twenty-fifth, all the world seemed to break apart in violent sound. From mortars, artillery, and offshore naval guns came a concentrated barrage of steel-cased explosive. The air vibrated and the earth rumbled, while over among the Jap positions rocks, trees, and dirt flew skyward. From Munda airport came the distant *cr-rump* of exploding bombs.

Then, in Rodger's B Company, a sharp whistle cut the air and coveralled men were moving forward in cautious files, pushing aside branches with their arms, snaking through bushes toward their baptism of machine-gun fire.

For three days, the men of the First Battalion had matters their own way. They moved steadily forward, meeting little resistance. Grapevine rumors told them that the 145th Infantry, to the south, had run into Jap strong points and lost many men. Farther yet to the south, the 161st Infantry had encountered fourteen Jap pill-boxes and was fighting it out foot by foot.

To Rodger's battalion, these rumors of trouble seemed distant and unreal. So far they had met nothing but isolated snipers and an occasional nuisance machine gun. They moved ahead so far that their advance patrols reached Bibolo Hill, guarding the airport itself. They began to entertain great dreams of taking the airport ramparts.

Then, suddenly, on the fourth day of fighting, Rodger's battalion found that it had walked into a trap. During the night, the Japanese had filtered in strength through the jungle to positions in the rear of the battalion, setting up their guns across the trails by which the battalion received its supplies.

Now it was no longer a matter of going ahead and taking the heights protecting the airport. It was a task of getting safely back to their own lines and establishing contact with their supplies. They were cut off and in danger of destruction.

Some of this Rodger Young knew, and the rest of it he sensed. The rumor of impending disaster spread quickly through the combat team.

What Rodger did know, for certain, on the afternoon of July thirty-first, was that not seventy-five yards in front of his platoon there was a Japanese machine gun.

It was queer, he thought, how suddenly conditions could change. One moment they had been crawling forward on hands and knees, quickly sliding over logs, now and then rising to their knees behind protecting tree trunks to search the woods on every side for hints of the Jap.

Then, all in a moment, there was the chattering sound of this gun, and the frantic cry of "First aid!" and every man was pressing

close to earth, wondering if he dared so much as move a foot.

The machine gun came to life again, and suddenly Rodger felt something slam into his shoulder. For an instant he wondered incredulously what had hit him. Then, cautiously, he put his hand there and drew it away, wet with blood. His own blood.

"Did he get you?" asked Private First Class Russell D. Reimert, Kutztown, Pennsylvania.

Rodger nodded briefly. Somehow, the fact that he was wounded seemed unimportant. The only important thing on earth was that Jap gun, up ahead.

The gun, he decided, must be on that higher ground that rose just in front of him. Placed as it was, it had an appallingly clear field of fire over all the platoon. It was apparent to Rodger that the platoon had crawled into an ambush. The Japs had let them get close, and now they were lying in the clear, unable to move.

As he was thinking this out, a hoarse voice behind him was calling him back. Everywhere along the line, the word was passed: "*Withdraw. Pull back. Withdraw.*"

But there's a special art to withdrawing. Some men must stay their ground and continue to fire, in order to occupy enemy attention while the rest make their getaway. Otherwise, the entire unit can well be annihilated by the unthreatened foe.

Whether Rodger reasoned this out, nobody can know. Already members of the platoon were beginning to withdraw, steeling themselves against the anticipation of a volley of bullets as they crabbed backward through the brush.

Rodger's head was lifted, scanning the rise of ground in front. With a cry of triumph, he turned and yelled to his retreating comrades:

"I see that machine gun!"

He moved out from his inadequate concealment, going not back, but toward the enemy. The gun sprang to life, hitting him again.

"Come on back!" Reimert screamed. "Fuzz!"

But now Rodger was firing. His first shots momentarily silenced the gun and he took advantage of the lull to slither sideways and crawl still nearer.

Then the gun came to life again, and Rodger replied. The duel continued, with the Ohio boy crawling closer and closer all the time.

Now the Jap gun had no time for the rest of the platoon. It was entirely occupied with one lone soldier who had already wounded several of its crew and would soon be within grenade-throwing distance.

Appalled, yet fascinated by the spectacle, the rest of the platoon could now withdraw in safety. This they did, obedient to the orders given them.

Twice wounded, Young took a quick glance through the clump of bushes that sheltered him, and saw that he was within easy throwing distance of the emplacement. He felt moments of dizziness, now, like that time he had hit his head on the basketball floor. There was a loud ringing in his ears, too, as if the telephone in the hall at home were buzzing. Had the gang been up to Sandusky recently for a swim?

His eyes—things seemed to be getting a little darker, as if his glasses had clouded over. In the capacious pocket of his jungle suit he found a grenade and threw it, noting with satisfaction the cloud of earth and smoke that rose in front of the gun. He pulled out another and tossed it. Feeling that triumph was very close, determined to finish the job before the world went black, he rose to a crouch to heave a third grenade squarely into the middle of the gun crew.

In that instant, a swift silent volley of steel bullets found him and he fell forward on his face, his work ended.

Somewhere in the jungle to the rear, his close friend, Al Rigby, was muttering with choked-up conviction:

“If it hadn’t been for Fuzz, we’d never have got out alive.”

Reimert’s lids smarted with harsh dry-eyed grief as he gave voice to the thoughts of the platoon: “Fuzz got us out of that one. Fuzz did it, alone.”

The man who had renounced leadership because of defective hearing had unconsciously assumed leadership in the crisis. He had rescued his platoon from death.

The Medal of Honor was awarded to Fuzz’s mother, Mrs.

Nicholas E. Young, at Fort Knox, Kentucky, January 17, 1944, by Major General Charles L. Scott, Commanding General of the Armored Command.

When someone commented on how well she bore up under the ceremony, she replied:

“Rodger wrote us from the South Pacific that whatever happened, he was sure we could ‘take it.’ You see, he had faith in us. So, naturally, we can’t fail him now.”

Frank Petrarca

MEDICAL CORPSMAN



On New Georgia Island, July 31, 1943

FRANK J. PETRARCA, sunny-dispositioned Italian-American, wanted to join the Ohio National Guard but wasn't sure his mother would consent. So he decided to practice a bit of good-natured deception.

He showed her the release that must be signed before an underage boy could enlist.

"If you'll sign this paper," he told her, "I'll be able to get a good job."

Mrs. Betty Petrarca didn't read and write English, although she had been in this country since 1905. That was the year Dominic had sent passage money to Campobasso, Italy, telling her to join him in Cleveland, Ohio. It was a fine young city, he told her. It was growing fast, and there was plenty of work for a carpenter. They would do fine, in the new country, and make plenty of money. So she came to Cleveland and married Dominic, and ever since that day she had been too busy raising a family of seven children to spend much time at books or night classes.

When her boy Frank presented the paper she signed it without hesitation, because jobs were none too plentiful in the 'thirties. Since leaving school, young Frank had worked at WPA jobs and helped his father as carpenter's assistant when there was carpenter work to be done. A good job was something to get.

So Frank joined the 145th Infantry, Thirty-seventh Division, and began drilling in the armory. Then, one day, a drill sergeant called at the Petrarca home in uniform and Mrs. Petrarca opened the door. The man asked for Frank, and Mrs. Petrarca's hand went to her throat, and her lip trembled slightly. Was Frank in trouble? What had he done? Was this man coming to arrest her boy?

Frank hurried into the living room to assure her that the drill sergeant was a friend.

"I'm in the Army, Mom," he explained. "I wear a uniform myself."

Mrs. Petrarca was so relieved she forgave Frank for deceiving her, and Frank decided on his part that it was the last time he would ever do anything like that.

"It was the only time," his sister writes, "that he ever deceived his mother."

Frank's promise to his mother that her signature on the paper would bring him a "swell job" materialized in an unexpected way on October 15, 1940. On that day, the Thirty-seventh Division was mustered into Federal Service and Frank laid down his carpenter's tools for good, to begin a career of training that was to take him to Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, the Fiji Islands, and Guadalcanal.

On the Fiji Islands, the division was trained in the arts of jungle warfare, after which it was transported to Guadalcanal, now a thriving American base, to wait for imminent action.

Frank, now approaching his twenty-fifth birthday, was in the medical detachment of the 145th Infantry Regiment. Not long after he came ashore at Guadalcanal, a husky veteran came up to him, grabbed him by the shoulders, and gave him a hearty welcome. It was his cousin, Marine Staff Sergeant William Fioritto.

Later Fioritto wrote home that Frank made frequent trips to native villages to doctor the sores and ailments of Solomon Islanders. "They call Frank the Big White Doctor," he reported.

From the Marine veteran, Frank learned something of how Guadalcanal was won. He looked at the hills to the south of the airport and thought of the battles fought there for the crests. He saw the foxholes and emplacements on the very edge of the airfield where savage Jap attacks had been repulsed. Now, in the summer of 1943, Guadalcanal was an advanced base, far removed from any threat except an occasional air raid.

But Guadalcanal was only the first step in our conquest of Japanese outposts. It was one of the lower islands of a string of islands that ran in a northwesterly direction all the way to the powerful Japanese base at Rabaul. On the way to Rabaul was the island of New Georgia, containing the Munda airfield. Already

American troops were fighting there. The Forty-third Division had landed in the New Georgia mud in June. While Frank Petrarca waited at Guadalcanal, one battalion of his regiment boarded Navy LST's and departed for the front. A little later, units of the Twenty-fifth Division followed. The Twenty-fifth was the battle-hardened division that had completed the conquest of Guadalcanal. From this activity, Frank must have known that the day was near when he would be moving into action himself.

It was July nineteenth when the remainder of Frank's regiment climbed aboard the steel-sided LST's (Landing Ship Tanks) for the one-day ferry trip to the battle area. They came to Kokorana Island, a small platter of mud and jungle just six miles across blue water from the forbidding green shore of New Georgia. From his bivouac on Kokorana, Frank could hear shells exploding in the region of Munda airfield. He might have glimpsed United States destroyers, running close to the skyline, throwing high explosive.

The black, sticky, universal mud of Kokorana must have given him an inkling of what he would encounter to the north. Veterans who fought both at Guadalcanal and New Georgia unhesitatingly say that for deep mud and impenetrable jungle, New Georgia ranks first.

On July twenty-first, the 145th, minus the battalion that had gone to New Georgia a couple of weeks before, crossed the last six miles of water and landed at a place called Laiana Beach, where Major General Robert S. Beightler had his Thirty-seventh Division command post. Here, Frank learned, they were only a few hundred yards from the Japs. No more than three miles to the west was Munda airfield, last stronghold of the Japs on New Georgia. Between Laiana Beach and the airfield lay jungle, deep mud, a few trails, and a rampart of low hills.

Dressed in denim jungle suits, wearing combat packs, and helmets, carrying entrenching tools, guns, and ammunition, the 145th formed in single file and started inland. The Forty-third Division would attack westward along the beach. Petrarca's 145th Infantry would be next in line, inland.

By July twenty-fourth the regiment was in position, lying in muddy foxholes under a drizzle of rain, waiting for H Hour.

Everything had gone well so far. There had been only a few snipers' bullets. There had been no Jap strong points, no ambushes, only mud.

Once there had been seven thousand Japs on New Georgia. How many were left, neither Frank nor his commanding general knew. The Japs had a means of getting reinforcements, however, from nearby Kolombangara. Fresh troops might be lying in wait for the 145th, somewhere ahead.

D Day was early Sunday morning, July twenty-fifth. Before the first hint of dawn had filtered down through the dense jungle roof, the sound of the barrage broke the stillness. From batteries on near-by islands, and from our Navy, a curtain of shells filled the air with a rustling noise, and up ahead came the unending roar of high explosive.

Men of the 145th learned, as they pushed their way westward, not to advance on trails, but to beat the jungle to right and left, cutting the brush with their jungle knives to let their bodies through. They discovered that the Japs sometimes let an advance patrol go by, before opening fire on the following troops. Under fire, they learned more wisdom and caution in a few hours than a month of training could have given them.

Frank advanced with the leading elements of the attack. On July twenty-seventh, the attacking elements had forced their way through jungle to the foot of Horseshoe Hill. Here they came under such intense fire that the advance abruptly stopped.

Ahead, on the slopes of the hill, were Japanese pillboxes built of coral, covered with logs and brush. From the slits in front, machine guns poked their barrels, and at the corners automatic rifles protected the pillboxes from side attacks. More than seventy Japanese emplacements were later to be counted on Horseshoe Hill, so placed as to protect each other and make advance almost impossible.

Going along with the assault wave, Frank Petrarca advanced to within one hundred yards of the Jap fortifications. Jap knee-mortar shells were landing in among the men, and bullets were cracking overhead.

There were cries: "I'm hit!" "First-aid!"

Frank, himself pinned down by the fire from the slopes ahead,

raised a cautious head, peered out from under the rim of his helmet, and saw that the men who needed help were some twenty-five yards in front of him. One was Private Scott. Two other wounded were near him.

Frank moved forward, taking advantage of each slight rise of ground, until he was beside Scotty. Scott was in a bad way. Frank skillfully dusted sulfa powder and worked with bandage and tape.

He didn't tell Scotty how bad he was. With a comforting word, "I'll be back," he crawled to where the other two men were lying and quickly bandaged them. These two weren't hurt so badly.

"I'm going back to Scotty," Frank said.

"You better stay where you are," the others muttered.

But Frank was gone, back to a man who couldn't live long, but who desperately needed the comforting presence of someone near by. With his body, Frank shielded the other, talking to him, telling him that everything was going to be all right.

Men in the forward elements began to talk about this medical man who appeared wherever the fire was hottest, wherever wounded men needed help.

Two days later, the regiment found itself under a terrific mortar barrage, and there were more cries for aid. One came from Frank's own detachment. He crawled over and found his sergeant partly buried in a foxhole, covered with dirt and unconscious.

Frank dug him out, restored him to consciousness, and hauled him back to a safe point where litter bearers could evacuate him. Then Frank was going forward again, to see what more he could do.

By this time, the 145th was on Horseshoe Hill itself, facing bitter fire from the heights just beyond. The Japs were making a desperate stand, here, because Horseshoe Hill protected Munda airfield, and whoever held the hill could see all the surrounding territory.

In their advance, men of the 145th inched their way over the exposed crest of a ridge, where bursts of machine-gun fire forced them to the ground. Two men, eight or ten yards ahead of anyone else, found themselves crowded into a shallow foxhole just twenty yards from a Jap gun.

As these two men lay there, a knee mortar shell exploded almost

on top of them, seriously wounding one of the two. Petrarca heard the call and ran up the slope of the hill. Coming to the top, he dropped to the ground and began to work his way across the crest, where he was completely exposed to the same fire that had pinned down the two soldiers.

Private Hershel F. Pence, the unwounded man in the foxhole, yelled back a warning:

"Hold it, Chang!" (Frank's nickname was "Chang.") "You can't make it! Wait'll things quiet down! Wait!"

Frank ignored the warning. Thus far in the fight he had carried his first-aid kit everywhere, regardless of danger. Now, the only fact of importance was that up ahead was a soldier whose life might be saved if he received immediate attention.

Somewhere, a few dozen yards away, a Japanese soldier placed the curved saddle of his short-barreled knee mortar against the ground and dropped a shell into it. When Frank was just two yards from the foxhole, the projectile arched downward and exploded beside him. Fragments struck him, mortally wounding him. For an instant he lay on the ground, limp.

Then, something in his valiant soul made him force himself to his knees, raise a fist, and yell defiantly at the enemy, just twenty yards away. After that, with what was left of his swiftly ebbing strength, he tried to pull himself to the foxhole. Almost within arm's reach of his objective, he died.

The day of his final mission of mercy was Frank's twenty-fifth birthday. He was born in Cleveland, July 31, 1918. He died within sight of Munda airfield, New Georgia Island, July 31, 1943. He was the first Ohioan ever to receive the nation's highest award for heroism, the Medal of Honor.

Because Mrs. Betty Petrarca wasn't strong enough to leave the house, the presentation was made by Major General Charles L. Scott, commanding general of the Armored Command, in the living room of the Petrarca home at 11300 Woodland Ave. The mayor of Cleveland was there, the priest, Frank's father Dominic, his sister Edith, and a few others. Mrs. Petrarca sobbed a little as General Scott placed the ribbon around her neck.

With the ceremony finished, there were Frank's letters to re-read. All of them were cheerful. They said: "Get those apple pies ready."

And: "Have a turkey in the icebox." And: "Save my money for me, so I can buy a car when I get back."

Then there were his pictures, most of them smiling. The most treasured picture of all was the one showing Frank, holding a rifle and kneeling on a shell-torn hill in New Georgia. One day, at a newsreel theater, the family had looked at a sequence showing American troops advancing on Munda. Suddenly someone shouted: "That's Frank!"

The newsreel company made a print for them, and Mr. and Mrs. Petrarca now have it, showing their son unshaven, begrimed, clad in denims and wearing a combat pack, but still smiling.

Gerry Kisters

ADVANCE SCOUT



Near Gagliano, Sicily, July 31, 1943

THE lot of the average soldier is to spend days and weeks in the front lines without seeing an enemy at all. This wasn't true of Gerry H. Kisters. Time after time, Kisters dealt with the enemy at close range, playing grim games of hide-and-seek in the hills of Tunis and the mountains of Sicily, running into ambushes and gun-to-gun encounters behind rocks and across road blocks.

The reason for this unusual experience lay in the nature of Kisters' outfit. He belonged to the Ninety-first Reconnaissance Squadron, the first organization of its kind in this war. The squadron's task was to scout the country ahead of the infantry and make contact with the enemy. The method of making contact was simple. You simply moved ahead until somebody shot at you. Then, if you lived, you hurried back and reported what you had found.

In other wars, cavalry was assigned to the job. In this war, horses were replaced by bantams, scout cars, mobile small artillery, and trucks, most vehicles mounting machine guns and containing radios. The Ninety-first Reconnaissance Squadron, some nine hundred men strong, was ready not only to explore any country over which cars could move, but to engage the enemy, repair roads, and dynamite obstructions. They were engineers, scouts, and combat troops rolled into one.

Belonging to this kind of outfit, Kisters was bound to see more of the enemy than the average foot soldier.

Yet there must have been times when Gerry Kisters and his fellow troopers wondered if they ever would close with the enemy. They landed in Africa the day before Christmas, 1942, at the port of Casablanca in French Morocco. While the rest of the troop fell

to, unloading supplies at the docks, Corporal Kisters went to the hospital to recover from an appendicitis operation performed on the ship, coming over. His first glimpse of a foreign land was the white plaster of a hospital ward.

A few weeks later, the squadron rode in trucks to the inland city of Marrakech, going through flat, rocky plains crisscrossed with camel trails, past small herds of goats tended by long-robed natives. In the hills around the ancient city they practiced field maneuvers.

They were still in Marrakech when Roosevelt and Churchill moved to that town from Casablanca to continue their conferences at the American Consulate.

"We could tell the room in which Roosevelt slept," Kisters says, "because there were always FBI men outside the door, day and night.

"The day after Roosevelt left, Corporal Heerdink and I were ordered to do guard duty in the tower of the consulate. The afternoon we were in the tower, Churchill came up with a couple of his aides, to sketch and paint. He had a good landscape to work on. About fifty miles off to the southeast, you could see the Atlas Mountain range, and in the foreground there were the roofs and walls of the city. In the four hours we were up there, Churchill only spoke to me once, to ask me for a match.

"I snapped a couple of pictures of him, but I'll never see them, because my camera and films were all stolen, later."

As the winter months slid by, the squadron followed the slow trail toward battle. From Marrakech they returned to Casablanca. From Casablanca they moved to Petit-jean, there to keep a wary eye on the Spanish-Moroccan border, and to stand guard at bridges and tunnels.

From Petit-jean they moved a short distance to the town with the long name, Souk-el-Arbes-du-Rahb, where they spent some time teaching French soldiers to handle American equipment.

The routine was broken for Kisters when Lieutenant Frederick Franklin called the tall noncom over and informed him: "You're going to the British mine school at Port Lyautey. Better pack up and get ready to go."

War began to seem a little less distant to Kisters as he listened to

the British instructor explaining the fine points of German mines and booby traps.

"This 'ere," pointing to a cylindrical metal container, "is what we call Bouncing Betty. It's anti-personnel. Three little prongs stick up out of the ground. When a soldier steps on one, the mine jumps up in the air abaht shoulder high and explodes, scatterin' steel balls.

"And this one—" pointing to the flat Teller mine—"is anti-tank. You got to be careful diggin' it out, or it'll blow up in yer 'ands. Before you go liftin' one, feel for these two little 'oles." One in the side, and one beneath. "If there ain't no igniter attached, and no wires leading out from 'em, it's safe to take 'em up."

Kisters spent some weeks learning how to handle the ingenious packages of death that Germans left in their wake, to slow up the oncoming enemy. Meanwhile, parties from the squadron made trips to the front to learn what actual fighting was like, and on their return they held powwows with the rest of the squadron.

Somehow, from these talks, the men got the impression that the Ninety-first wouldn't have to do any fighting in Africa. Things were moving fast, up at the front. On March twenty-first, the British Eighth Army had broken through Rommel's lines at Mareth. On April tenth, the British First Army had shattered the Germans at their mountain defense line near Fondouk. Now the Germans were in full retreat toward their last strongholds of Bizerte and Tunis. Rommel's Afrika Corps and General von Arnim's army had joined forces for a last stand.

"It will be over," the Ninety-first thought, "before we get there." And there was both relief and regret at the thought.

Then, before April was half gone, bantams, armored scout cars, large quantities of ammunition and field rations poured in on the squadron. New personnel came in to bring the organization to fighting strength.

"We're going to the front!" the word spread, "and we've got to get there fast."

Calmness and indifference vanished, and the men leaped into an orgy of fevered but methodical preparation. One night the new men came in. Gun boxes were unpacked and Garands, carbines, and Browning automatics, greasy with cosmoline, were issued to

the newcomers. Extra clothing was stowed into barracks bags and loaded on trucks. Rations were distributed.

By the time all this was done, it was one o'clock in the morning. The squadron turned into pup tents for a final comfortable sleep, and by five in the morning they were stowing their tent rolls into the three-quarter-ton demolition truck with which each platoon was equipped. There was a hot breakfast of corned beef, scrambled dehydrated eggs, coffee, and bread. Then, in the growing daylight, they were on the road, heading eastward toward some unknown future.

It was about seven hundred miles from their camp in Morocco to the front, and they made it in four days, traveling day and night. If they had ever doubted that they would fight, the speed with which they were moving now convinced them.

The roads were gravel, but good. At crossroads, they stopped beside quartermaster dumps and refueled. They came to the town of Relizan and here they began stripping down to fighting trim. They had come from the States with two barracks bags and every item of clothing a prepared nation could give them—overcoat, blouse, extra shoes. All these, plus cameras and other personal effects useless in battle, went into the extra barracks bag and were deposited in Relizan.

As they moved on to Tebessa, the desert nights grew sharp and cold, and the men shivered as they rode. The plains country drifted behind and the terrain became rough. At Tebessa they stopped to make sure they were organized for action, and the new men properly assigned to radios, mortars, or machine guns according to their previous training. Now, when night fell, they traveled without headlights, and the towns through which they passed showed marks of shelling. Fewer and fewer civilians were in evidence. All these signs told the men that they were coming close to the front, and at the thought faces became blank with wonder.

At the coastal town of Tabarka they left their remaining barracks bag, taking with them only their bedrolls and canvas field bags containing socks, underwear, spare shirt, raincoat, and toilet articles. In the bedroll was a shelter half, two blankets, poles and tentpins. If they hadn't been motorized, they couldn't have taken even this much.

Up to Tabarka, the Ninety-first had traveled as a unit, a long impressive line of olive-drab vehicles. Now, as they left Tabarka, heading southeastward through the hills, the squadron broke up into troops, each troop traveling on its own, toward its assigned destination in the hills ahead.

Kisters' platoon, headed by Lieutenant Franklin, was the first platoon of B Troop. Even by itself, feeling its way through the dark countryside toward an invisible enemy, the platoon was an impressive combat unit. There were ten bantams, low-slung and powerful for their size. Two of these carried the husky 81-mm. mortar and its torpedolike shells. Most of the bantams had small two-way radios operating off dry cells, or the car battery. There were two scout cars carrying large radio sets with a greater range, and also mounting machine guns. There was a three-quarter-ton demolition truck containing power-operated saw and hammer, cases of TNT, picks, shovels, and other pioneer tools. In addition, the truck mounted a heavy machine gun. There was a 37-mm. cannon in its own three-quarter-ton truck. Finally, there were two motorcycles. Sixteen vehicles in all, carrying their own artillery and small arms, toting their own supplies, self-contained and stripped-down, ready for action.

Multiply the sixteen vehicles by four and you have a rough idea of B Troop with its three combat platoons and one headquarters platoon, as it rode into battle late in April, 1943.

This armored unit, now on its own, yet part of a larger plan, stopped late at night by a creekbed. The cars were dispersed and hidden under trees or camouflage nets. Men worked quietly, without lights, passing their orders in low mutters, wondering tensely if the enemy were within earshot. During the day's march they had passed foot soldiers going into the battle, and they had the feeling that they were out in front, naked in the night, and vulnerable. Those not on guard unrolled their bedrolls and crawled between blankets, fully dressed, to wait for the dawn.

Kisters' first evidence that there was such a thing as a German in this land came the next day on patrol. Riding in bantams, two patrols felt their way ahead to a Tunisian walled farm, consisting of a half-dozen stone buildings. Here Kisters examined the litter of a vanished enemy—cartridge cases bearing mysterious German

words, unfamiliar ration tins, strange cartridge shells in the abandoned gun emplacements out by the wall.

But there was no action—yet. The platoon was called back the next day and B Troop was once more on its way into the valley ahead, preceded by patrols of two or three bantams each.

By this time, the Ninety-first understood its mission. Beyond the hills ahead lay the important objective of Mateur, a crossroads town that the Germans would fight to hold. Approaching Mateur on the north was one infantry division, going through the hills. Another division was to the south, also working through hills. In between, advancing up the valley, was the Ninety-first, filling a nine-mile gap. Their mission wasn't merely reconnaissance. Like the infantry, they were to take and hold ground.

The approach to the valley was rough. Climbing the steep hills, trucks came perilously close to turning over. Men leaped out with spades to level off humps. They put their shoulders behind boulders and pushed them out of the path. Vehicles advanced cautiously, with a man sitting on a bumper to watch for the patch of recently turned earth that might be a German mine.

Up to this time, Kisters had been corporal in charge of the demolition truck of his platoon. But the country was so rough that the heavy machinery of the truck had to be left behind, and Kisters was reassigned to a bantam and put on patrol duty.

As they came down into the valley they were initiated to the peculiar sound of enemy artillery fire, and they soon learned to differentiate between the shell that passed overhead or to the side, and the one that landed close by.

They advanced slowly now, waiting for word from advance patrols before moving up the company, keeping vehicles well apart, content with a mile a day. Reports of casualties began to come in.

"Did you hear about C Troop? A shell landed right in the middle and got six guys."

When such words were passed through B Troop, men looked at each other with unexplainable awe, and their thoughts turned inward as they wondered when the mystery of death would strike closer home.

It wasn't to be long. Ahead of them, the valley was blocked off

by a ridge, and on this ridge the Germans were entrenched. From it, they could observe the valley and direct their own artillery on the advancing Americans.

B Troop crept to within a half mile of the ridge and dug in behind a low hill and in protecting ravines. They set up mortars and machine guns and 37's and began a close-range duel.

It was here that B Troop had its first casualties—Louis Kmet, radio operator; Woods; a big fellow named Wealdon. Louis Kmet was on his way up to a machine gun with ammunition when a salvo of three 88's came his way. He dropped flat and was unharmed. Then he heard more shells coming, and he got to his feet and started running. Had he stayed prone he might have been uninjured. Instead, he made the mistake of getting up. He was a good man, and the troop could ill afford to lose him.

The battle lasted four days. It was a duel of guns, with the Ninety-first sending out patrols to locate the German positions. One of these patrols Kisters led, taking it up to three mosquelike buildings on the flank of the German ridge. In the valley below the mosque he found a party of Germans and reported it, and very soon mortar fire made it warm for the enemy group.

Before the battle was decided, the enemy counterattacked. When they came on, Gerry Kisters was behind a machine gun on the edge of a gulley, protecting the 81-mm. mortar manned by his best friend, Bob Ackerman of Porter, Indiana. Neither Bob nor Gerry had a chance to fire. They heard the rattle of guns, but no Germans showed up in their sights, and in the end the word was passed that the attack had been driven off.

The next day, patrols reported that the ridge ahead was clear of Germans. Why, nobody precisely knew. In the vast checkerboard of battle, something had happened. Perhaps the infantry to north or south had advanced. At any rate, the Germans were gone and the Ninety-first climbed into its bantams, trucks, and scout cars and moved up onto the German ridge.

On the reverse slope, Kisters spent a day personally digging up fifty Teller mines and twenty Bouncing Betties. The squadron advanced through the mine field, camped for the night, and the next day raced an infantry regiment into Mateur.

Beyond the town, the Ninety-first sampled the unpleasant taste

of a repulse. On the shore of Lake Achkel, north of Mateur, the Germans were in a peculiarly strong position. They had fortified a hill—Djebel Achkel—that was completely surrounded by a swamp about a mile across. To the rear of the hill was the lake itself.

Officers quizzed the few natives in the town. "Are there many Germans on that hill?"

The replies were conflicting, but several natives insisted there were no Germans there.

A and B troops of the Ninety-first were ordered to attack. At the edge of the swamp they had to leave their vehicles, small cannon, and mortars behind. With guns and grenades they waded through the muck and swamp grass and began to climb the hill. A rain of fire greeted them.

Gerry Kisters was in the attack.

"We had to crawl down off the hill," he says. "We clawed through the muck on our hands and knees, with the sharp grass cutting our wrists and faces."

They went to another, lower part of the hill and tried again, only to prove to themselves that it would take heavy artillery preparation to reach the top. Kisters spent a sweaty day helping wounded men back across the mile-wide swamp, until his knees trembled and the muscles of his legs knotted up from exhaustion.

The men trailed back to their bivouac on the fringe of Mateur, disheartened and worn out.

By this time, the First Armored Division in Mateur was impatient to be on the road to Ferryville, sixteen miles to the north. The Tunisian campaign was approaching a climax. Our planes, now in control of the skies, were roaring overhead, pounding the German roads, reducing Bizerte to rubble. There was a chance, now, that if all units could keep advancing, the German retreat would become a rout. It was imperative to make haste.

The higher officers decided to bypass Djebel Achkel and be on their way, leaving a small unit to guard the hill. But before the Armored Division could advance, there had to be reconnaissance. Somebody had to take the lead and find out what was ahead.

The job fell to the Ninety-first Reconnaissance Squadron, with B Troop leading the way. Leading B Troop was Lieutenant Franklin's platoon. In the van of Franklin's platoon was Kisters, now a

staff sergeant in command of a section. Kisters was front man for a division.

"Better take a bantam, Gerry," Franklin ordered, "and explore the field to the left of the road. See if it's mined."

Gerry bumped over the ground. After a short while he got out and walked, eyes on the ground. He came across patches of newly turned earth, telltale signs of hastily placed mines. Presently he returned to the road and reported:

"The field is heavily mined. I don't believe tanks can get through."

Meanwhile another noncom reported mines on the other side of the road.

The officer considered a moment. "We'll go up the road," he said. "You lead the way, Gerry."

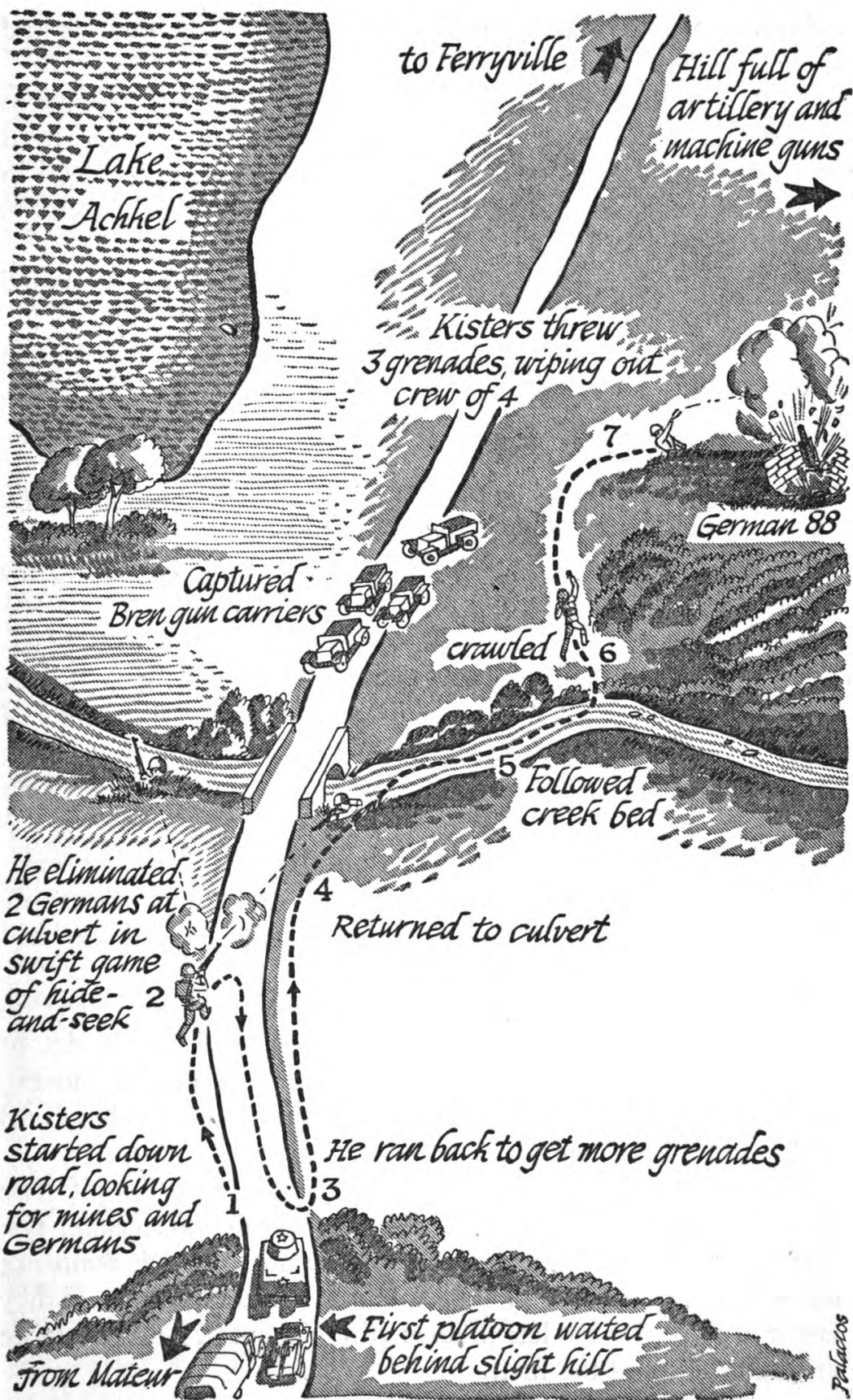
Gerry rode in the lead bantam, watching for signs of mines. Up ahead, as they approached a rise in the ground, he saw two suspicious-looking wires lying across the road. He walked ahead and identified them as telephone wires. They were harmless. He cut them and threw them aside, so others wouldn't halt.

Then he continued on over the rise, walking at the edge of the road, looking for mines, scanning the country to left and right. Off to the left was low, swampy ground leading to Lake Achkel. Off to the right were the hills called Djebel Zarour. The landscape seemed suspiciously quiet and peaceful. There was only the smell—the all-pervading odor of decaying things—to tell him that this was a battleground.

Then he saw something else. A little distance ahead, on the road, was a culvert and on either side of it stood what looked like British Bren gun carriers. As he paused to consider this phenomenon, his super-alert senses detected the rounded shape of a German helmet slowly rising above the weeds bordering the ditch spanned by the culvert. Beside it, another helmet began to rise.

Kisters brought up his M-1, sighted quickly, and fired. The heads disappeared.

He pulled out a grenade, and threw. Without waiting for the explosion, he ran to the opposite side of the road, behind one of the Bren gun carriers. Pausing there an instant, he leaped across the road, directly behind the ditch.



He saw one German lying there on the bank—the man he had shot. The other had disappeared.

At that moment he heard a noise under the culvert. Unable to see into the darkness of the tunnel, he leveled his M-1 and fired blind through the culvert. Then he leaped around to the road in front of the culvert in time to see a helmet slowly rising from the edge of the ditch.

Taking aim, he fired, and pulling another grenade out, he tossed it.

While this life-and-death game of tag was going on, Kisters saw the flash of German 88 cannons from the hills to the right. They were aiming not at him, but far down the road over which he had advanced.

Kisters ran back down the road to his car to get more grenades. He hung them on his belt and stuffed them in his pocket, meanwhile reporting what he had learned in panting breaths to his superior officer. Then he ran back to the culvert.

As he jumped into the ditch he saw the body of the second German, a youngster hardly eighteen. Keeping to the ditch, Kisters made his way toward the flash of the nearest 88. His powers of observation, sharpened by action, told him that there were many 88's in the hills of Djebel Zarour, and machine guns and snipers as well.

That they were aware of an American sergeant, crawling somewhere toward them in the gulleys and among the rocks, was amply proved by the machine-gun and rifle bullets that snapped overhead and ricocheted off near-by rocks.

Pausing frequently to look around, crawling from cover to cover, Gerry finally found himself to the rear and on one side of the 88 emplacement. He could plainly see the crew of four, moving about the gun, loading and firing. The emplacement was large and within throwing range.

In quick succession he threw three grenades into the pit. The Germans could hardly have supposed that doom was so close. The first sign must have been the sight of a serrated grenade bouncing down at their feet. But by the time they saw the grenade, if they saw it at all, it was too late to do anything about it. And two more grenades followed the first.

Kisters had done all the reconnoitering one man could do. He scuttled backward, made for low ground, and hurried back to the road and his platoon to report that the road block was cleared and the nearest 88 put out of action. The Ninety-first Squadron mounted into vehicles and boldly struck out for Ferryville, while behind them the tanks came through the mine field, fanned out on either side, and soon cleared the field of its 88's and machine guns.

For this action, taking place on May seventh, on the road between Mateur and Ferryville, Staff Sergeant Gerry Kisters of Bloomington, Indiana, received the Distinguished Service Cross.

Four days after the entering of Ferryville, the enemy forces under Von Arnim surrendered, and the Ninety-first Squadron had breathing space in which to get new equipment and new men to replace battle casualties. One man for whom a replacement was needed was Bob Ackerman, Kisters' closest friend, who was killed by a shell when the Ninety-first entered Ferryville.

As Kisters worked with his section, getting ready for an unknown future, he had time to catch up on mail from home, and to compare what he was doing with the life he had planned for himself. Although he was now only twenty-four years old, this tall, curly-headed soldier had already made a career for himself. Born in Salt Lake City, Utah, on March 2, 1919, he grew up in the atmosphere of the fur industry.

His father, a restless, energetic immigrant from Germany, had roved over most of Canada and the United States. In Canada he had worked for the Hudson's Bay Company and learned something about furs in the raw state. In this country, employed by a large St. Louis company, he learned the manufacturing side of furs, and before long he was in business for himself. He set up shop in various places, among them Provo, Utah, and Hannibal, Missouri, Mark Twain's home town. It was there, in Tom Sawyer country, that Gerry Kisters spent his boyhood.

In the 1930's, the elder Kisters decided to retire from the fur business. He put up a gas station and tourist cabins in Houghton Lake, Michigan, and for several years tried to make a living at it. But there was little profit in the tourist business in the 1930's, and

before long the father was once more a furrier, this time in Bloomington, Indiana.

While Kisters was at Houghton Lake he attended high school, and his height made him the logical center for the school basketball team. His team won three trophies, going as far as the regional tournament in state competition. There was swimming, too, and hunting, and all the outdoor sports that northern Michigan provides.

In Bloomington, Kisters' thoughts turned toward the task of making a living. Familiar with the furrier trade from afternoons and evenings in his father's shop, Gerry set up his own shop in Vincennes, Indiana. It was a business that took considerable capital and skill. You had to have fur sewing machines, regular sewing machines, cleaning equipment, a stock of furs. You had to know how to fashion furs into muffs, scarfs, and jackets, and how to repair the furs that were brought to you.

In the two years that he ran his own business, Gerry was just getting a good start toward a career when world events took a hand. On January 17, 1941, eleven months before Pearl Harbor, he was inducted into the Army at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana.

Like the rest of those million men in our early Army, Kisters underwent basic training at \$21 a month and advanced training at \$30. He went to Fort Bliss to train for cavalry duty but never saw a horse. Instead, he and his comrades were put on wheels and in time were formed into the Ninety-first Reconnaissance Squadron.

When Pearl Harbor became a part of our history and Kisters knew that his Army service would be indefinitely extended, he obtained leave to return to Bloomington and get married. A year of training followed, and in December, 1942, the Ninety-first sailed for Africa.

Now, after Tunis, Kisters was a battle-tested soldier, and the career of furrier was part of a distant past, hard to recapture. On July 10, 1943, came the great amphibious landing of Americans, British, and Canadians on the southern shore of Sicily, and two days later the Ninety-first debarked from landing craft and once more was engaged with the enemy.

In this campaign, the Ninety-first had an assignment much like

that in the valley leading to Mateur. On their right were the Canadians, as yet untried in battle. On their left was an American division. Between the two was the Ninety-first Reconnaissance Squadron, maintaining liaison, filling the gap, advancing and holding ground.

Gerry remembers the names of the towns through which they passed as they moved north, helping to drive the Germans toward Messina. There were Leonfort, Enna, and Nicosea.

Nicosea is indelible in his mind, because here his platoon ran into a German ambush. Fired on from the ground, they leaped off their vehicles, took down their light machine guns, and started to fight. In the confused sanguine battle that followed, vivid pictures stood out. A bantam burning from a direct mortar hit, its three occupants injured. A Ninety-first scout car approaching and unexpectedly opening fire on them, thus proving that the Germans had captured some part of the troop and turned its weapons against them.

When night fell, Kisters' platoon withdrew, but the sergeant didn't go back with them. Instead he stayed there, "to see what the Germans would do." They might advance on the area, in which case he could work his way through the enemy positions and report the fact. Or they might withdraw.

When dawn came, he was able to go back to Lieutenant Franklin and tell him the Germans had withdrawn.

On July 31, Gerry's platoon was camped in a town not far beyond Nicosea. The country around here was mountainous. Lieutenant Franklin sent out a patrol of several bantams to explore the mountain road ahead and to make contact with the enemy.

Some time later the patrol returned. They had been two miles up the road without encountering any Germans. That was as far as they had gone.

Acting on the strength of this information, the platoon moved across a river and pitched camp in an olive grove on the far bank.

"Gerry," the lieutenant said, "you'll go up the road with Lieutenant Price and see what you can find."

They took three bantams. In the first were Kisters with the driver, Corporal Technician Goad, and Gunner Sam Caruso, a curly-headed Italian with a reputation for intestinal fortitude. A

second bantam followed. Behind it came the third car bearing a radio set, Lieutenant Orsell C. Price, of Jamestown, New York, and radioman Rosenbaum. Price also was a radio specialist. Altogether there were nine in the party.

They drove up the steep road, pausing frequently to look long and hard at any suspicious bulge in the rocky landscape. Kisters kept his eye on the speedometer, noting each tenth of a mile added to the trip mileage.

The road made many hairpin turns, with the cliff always to their left and slopes of varying pitch on their right. The trip mileage crept past 2.0 and the men watched more closely, the gunners crouched behind their machine guns, Kisters and the others with carbines and M-1's ready in their hands. Creeping thus into enemy territory, their lives were dependent on their alertness, their keen ability to detect the source of the first burst of fire, and their quickness in returning it.

At 2.7 miles from camp, Gerry motioned Goad to a stop. He jumped from the bantam and walked forward to examine a road block—a blown-out culvert that left a deep gap in the stone highway. Presently Lieutenant Price came up to join him.

While these two studied the block, their gunners were swinging the muzzles of their machine guns and Brownings over the landscape, ready to reply to any fire.

There was no way to get around the hole in the road. To the left was the cliff. To the right was a more gradual slope downward, but great boulders made it impossible for vehicles to pass by.

"I'll radio Lieutenant Franklin to bring up the demolition truck," Lieutenant Price said. It would take a crew with picks, shovels, and dynamite to fill in the hole.

While the officer went back to his bantam, Kisters pondered the slopes to the right. It was queer that the patrol hadn't been fired upon. Where the Germans set up a road block they usually covered the spot with machine guns.

A couple of hundred yards down the valley to the right was a stone Sicilian farmhouse. Lying along the wall were what looked like pieces of discarded German clothing.

When the lieutenant returned to say that the demolition truck was on its way, Kisters reported his suspicions.

"If they're around here anywhere," he said, "they're probably down in that house."

They decided to investigate.

They didn't simply walk up to it. Ahead and to the right, the ground rose from the valley to meet the road once more. Making a wide swing, the officer and noncom moved from rock to rock toward the base of the upward slope, with the intention of approaching the house from the side and rear. Because, if there were guns, they would be directed upon the road. They wouldn't so likely be emplaced to cover the side and rear.

The pair moved with catlike quietness, not permitting themselves the luxury even of a whisper. They must have been quiet indeed. As they stepped from the shelter of a rock into a little open space, they found themselves standing on the very edge of a machine-gun emplacement, staring down at four surprised, blank-faced Germans.

The lieutenant's tommy gun and Kisters' carbine were pointed downward. There was nothing the Germans could do. Their hands instinctively rose, their lips muttering "*Kamerad.*"

Why this gun had failed to fire on the road, Kisters never knew. Perhaps they had been inexcusably asleep. Or perhaps they were waiting for bigger game than two soldiers. Certainly they had failed to follow the movements of the two men after their departure from the road block.

Whatever the answer, Kisters and the lieutenant had played in luck. The two Americans ordered the Germans slightly away from their gun and began disarming them. They had no more than begun, when a chattering burst of noise broke the quiet, so shockingly close that both men dropped to the ground.

It was another machine gun, not more than twenty yards up the slope. Lying prone, Kisters peered upward through the brush and rocks, locating the source. Bullets snapped overhead. Kisters made his decision. Differences in rank were forgotten.

"You stay here and watch these men," Kisters said. "I'll go up and see if I can get that gun."

The lieutenant nodded, and Kisters began to worm his way up the rock-studded slope. He had only his carbine, with fifteen shells in the clip.

He could see the gun now, camouflaged behind brush, its muzzle pointed his way, spitting flame.

He had no time to wonder why he wasn't riddled. All he knew was that the bullets were passing so close overhead that they seemed to burn his scalp.

Behind the brush concealing the gun he saw a moving shadow. He fired at it. Every time a shadow showed, he fired.

Meanwhile, snipers on the slopes were firing at him, whenever they could detect an arm or a leg.

The first sniper's bullet to hit Kisters was a ricochet off a rock. It slammed into his left leg sideways, shattering the tendons and muscles just above the ankle. He felt this bullet. The sensation was like being hit with a sledge hammer.

More bullets hit his leg, but these he didn't feel at all. One entered a leg above the knee, going completely through the thigh. Two creased his shin bone. Six wounds in all punctured his legs while he lay there, firing at the moving forms behind the gun, inching closer to it all the time.

Presently the machine gun ceased firing and a lone German rose from behind the brush and dodged and ran up the slope, out of sight. Later, three dead Germans were found lying beside the gun.

As the surviving German ran, a bullet crashed into Kisters' right arm above the elbow, severing the nerve, leaving his arm numb and useless. With that final bullet, all firing on the slope ceased. The snipers must have taken fright and left, along with the fleeing gunner.

Kisters, his carbine empty, bleeding from seven wounds, one arm useless, yelled down the slope.

"I'm hit! Bring up those prisoners to help me out of here!"

Lieutenant Price arrived a moment later. He looked at Kisters on the ground, at the silent machine gun above him, at the now-quiet Sicilian mountainscape, and marveled.

They ripped away the clothes from the wounds, cleaned them as best they could, dusted sulfa powder on the bleeding holes, gave Kisters pills to swallow. They applied tourniquets and bandages, although there wasn't nearly enough gauze. The Germans but-



5- Kisters crawls toward second gun, receives seven wounds but wipes out crew.

4- Capture machine gun and 4 Germans

2- Kisters and Lt. Price inspect road block.

Sicilian stone house in valley.

3- Take round-about course to scout house

1- At 2.7 miles the patrol is stopped by a blown-out culvert.

First platoon bivouacked in olive grove.

toned together two shelter halves to form a hammock and carefully lifted Kisters into it.

They made their way to the road, and while the sergeant was being gently placed in a bantam, Price was radioing back to Franklin:

"Kisters has been badly wounded. We captured one machine-gun nest and took four prisoners. Kisters went on alone and knocked out another nest. Killed three of the crew himself and made the fourth man run."

For Staff Sergeant Gerry H. Kisters, the long and painful road home had begun. Lieutenant Franklin personally drove him back across the river to the squadron aid station, telling him with suppressed emotion:

"I'm putting you in for a commission right now. And you'll get an oak leaf cluster for that DSC."

His wounds were dressed at the squadron aid station and he was sent back to the field hospital where they operated to remove pieces of rock from his shattered flesh.

By degrees, as his condition permitted, he was shifted back to Africa, where they cut open his right arm to join the severed nerve, so that he could regain the use of his hand. The operation was successful, and today Kisters' right arm is as sound as his left.

He returned across the Atlantic on a British transport, arriving in New York on October tenth, and went to Halloran General Hospital on Staten Island, to be treated for infections resulting from his weakened physical condition.

From there he was moved to the Fletcher General Hospital in Cambridge, Ohio, where he was reunited with his wife.

In December he found himself at the Nichols General Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky, the hospital nearest his home in Bloomington, Indiana. It was there that he received a letter from Lieutenant Franklin, still overseas, saying: "You've been recommended for the Medal of Honor."

There came a day in February, 1944, when Second Lieutenant Gerry Kisters received the Distinguished Service Cross from General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, in a ceremony at the Pentagon Building, Washington. It was for—

"Extraordinary heroism in action in May, 1943, near . . . Tu-

nia. Staff Sergeant Kisters made several individual reconnaissance missions, returning each time with timely and valuable information concerning the location of enemy artillery emplacements.

"Alone, and while subjected to enemy heavy artillery and concentrated machine-gun fire and individual rifle fire, Staff Sergeant Kisters crept forward on the artillery piece which was firing on our forces near . . . By the effective use of his hand grenades and rifle, Staff Sergeant Kisters wiped out the entire crew. . . ."

From the Pentagon Building, Kisters was escorted to the White House, where he received the Medal of Honor from the President of the United States, for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life, above and beyond the call of duty," for action on July 31, 1943, near Gagliano, Sicily.

On that day Kisters learned that he was unique among soldiers. He was the only living soldier, to date, to hold both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Medal of Honor.

All of this leaves the calm lieutenant relatively unmoved. Ask him what he intends to do when the war is over, and he replies:

"I'm going back into the furrier business."

It is the business he knows best. In the midst of glory, Kisters is looking forward to Peace.

General Douglas MacArthur

DEFENDER OF THE PHILIPPINES



DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, son of a Civil War general and himself a hero of two wars, was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Roosevelt, in the name of Congress, on March 25, 1942. The story of General MacArthur's life, and his devotion to his country, is known to all the nation. This is the citation describing the heroism that has earned him the country's highest award for valor:

"General Douglas MacArthur, Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the Far East. For conspicuous leadership in preparing the Philippine Islands to resist conquest, for gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action against invading Japanese forces, and for the heroic conduct of defensive and offensive operations on the Bataan Peninsula. He mobilized, trained, and led an army which has received world acclaim for its gallant defense against a tremendous superiority of enemy forces in men and arms. His utter disregard of personal danger under heavy fire and aerial bombardment, his calm judgment in each crisis, inspired his troops, galvanized the spirit of resistance of the Filipino people, and confirmed the faith of the American people in their armed forces."

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